



# Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS

MONDAY — 29 AUG 2022



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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 Iraq Shiite cleric to retire? Sparks unrest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/plot-twist-iraqi-shiite-cleric-announces-retirement-88994306">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/plot-twist-iraqi-shiite-cleric-announces-retirement-88994306</a>
GIST	<p>BAGHDAD -- Hundreds of followers of an influential Shiite cleric scaled the cement barriers leading to Iraq's government palace after he announced his resignation from politics on Monday, spurring fears of more volatility amid an unprecedented political crisis.</p> <p>Shortly after Muqtada al-Sadr announced his “final” retirement from politics, hundreds of his followers rushed to the government palace, the seat of the caretaker government. It was the first time his followers have attempted to breach the palace since thousands of them stormed Iraq's parliament to prevent al-Sadr's rivals from forming a government.</p> <p>The protesters used ropes to pull down cement barriers leading to the palace gates.</p> <p>Iraq's military called on the protesters to withdraw immediately from the Green Zone and to practice self-restraint “to prevent clashes or the spilling of Iraqi blood,” according to a statement.</p> <p>“The security forces affirm their responsibility to protect government institutions, international missions, public and private properties,” the statement said.</p> <p>In a tweet, the cleric said he was withdrawing from politics and ordered the closure of his party offices. It is not the first time al-Sadr has announced his retirement from politics, but many fear it could spur more escalation.</p> <p>Al-Sadr’s statement on Monday was a reaction to the retirement of Shiite spiritual leader Ayatollah Kadhim al-Haeri, who counts many of al-Sadr’s supporters as followers. The previous day, al-Haeri announced he would be stepping down as a religious authority and called on his followers to support Iran’s Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, not the Shiite spiritual center in Iraq's holy city of Najaf.</p> <p>The move was a blow to al-Sadr. In his statement he said al-Haeri's stepping down “was not out of his own volition.”</p> <p>Al-Sadr won the largest share of seats in the October elections but failed to form a majority government, leading to what has become one of the worst political crises in Iraq in recent years.</p> <p>His bloc later resigned from parliament and his supporters last month stormed the parliament building in Baghdad. Al-Sadr has demanded that parliament be dissolved and early elections held.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 Disease contracted by breathing Calif. air</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/29/california-valley-fever-disease-climate-crisis">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/29/california-valley-fever-disease-climate-crisis</a>
GIST	<p>The illness that would change Rob Purdie’s life started with a headache, a terrible pain that began around New Year’s 2012 and stayed for months.</p> <p>It was only after several trips to urgent care facilities, multiple doctors and incorrect diagnoses – everything from sinus infections to cluster headaches – he learned what was wrong with him.</p> <p>The Bakersfield, <a href="#">California</a>, resident had meningitis caused by Valley fever, a disease that comes from <i>Coccidioides</i>, a fungus endemic to the soil of the US south-west. Years of debilitating illness, struggles finding effective treatments and other hardships followed.</p>

“It took everything – my health,” Purdie said. “It had a huge impact on my family. We lost everything, all our financial security, all our retirement.”

The father of two is among the small percentage of people who develop serious forms of Valley fever – most people don’t get sick after exposure and very few have severe symptoms. But for those who develop the chronic form of the disease, it can be devastating.

Valley fever is increasing in California’s Central Valley, as it has for years, and experts say that in the future cases could rise across the American west as the climate crisis renders the landscape drier and hotter.

Kern county, located just north of Los Angeles at the end of the Central Valley, has reported a substantial increase over the last decade. The county, where Purdie lives, documented about 1,000 cases in 2014. In 2021, there were more than 3,000 cases, according to public health data.

### **Feeding off the climate crisis**

Testing and awareness of Valley fever has improved in recent years, and at the same time the county has grown, leading to more cases. But there has also been a significant growth in the illness, said Dr Royce Johnson, the medical director of the Valley Fever Institute in Bakersfield.

“There’s enormously more Valley fever now. I can tell that just from the work,” Johnson said. “We think most of that has to do with climate and weather.”

The fungus that causes Valley fever needs hot and dry conditions to survive, which the US south-west provides, said Morgan Gorris, an earth system scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory who has studied the relationship between climate crisis and Valley fever, or *coccidioidomycosis*.

“Much of the western US is very dry already. When we look at projections of climate change it’s expected that the western half of the US will continue to remain pretty dry and that’s going to continue to support Valley fever,” said Gorris.

The fungus grows in the dirt as a filament, Johnson said, that segments and breaks off and becomes airborne when disturbed, traveling as far as 75 miles – it has even infected sea otters. People can become exposed to Valley fever by digging in undisturbed soil or simply by breathing.

“Somebody that lives in Long Beach and drives to the Bay Area and has their window rolled down on the 5 can get Valley fever,” Johnson said. “If you’re doing an archaeological dig in the foothills west of [Bakersfield] you can ... you’re basically standing on top of it.”

People who work outdoors are thought to be at greater risk. Last summer, seven firefighters who responded to fires around the Tehachapi mountains, south-east of Bakersfield, experienced respiratory illness. Three were diagnosed with Valley fever, according to an article published by the [CDC](#).

About 40% of people develop a respiratory illness that can be very mild, according to Johnson, and 1% have more severe outcomes. Most people won’t become ill after exposure to the fungus, and of those who do, experts estimate very few actually receive a Valley fever diagnosis.

In the US, primarily in Arizona and California, there were roughly 20,000 cases of Valley fever reported to the CDC in [2019](#) and an average of about 200 associated deaths each year from 1999 to 2019, according to the most recent data available.

[Research](#) authored by Gorris and others has shown that the climate crisis could expand the areas in which Valley fever is found. In a high greenhouse gas emissions climate warming scenario, the area endemic to Valley fever expanded farther north, reaching the US- Canadian border by 2100, Gorris said of the research.

Under a more moderate scenario with less warming and fewer emissions, there is less northward expansion of the disease, she said.

“Mitigating climate change could mitigate the health effects of Valley fever,” she said. “It’s important to understand that it’s not just doom and gloom.”

In California, as the climate shifts to more intense periods of rainfall and then subsequent dry seasons, conditions in which Valley fever thrives, there could be more cases, she added.

### **Raising awareness**

Purdie became sick after such a period, a wet year followed by dry weather, he recalls. At the time, he lived on a few acres on the outskirts of Bakersfield where he frequently spent time outdoors.

Valley fever threw his life into disarray. Purdie, who was then a financial planner, struggled to work and had to sell treasured family mementoes to support his family as he sought to get a hold on the illness.

He was eventually able to find the right treatment, which requires four pills a day and medication administered directly into his brain every 16 weeks. It’s a difficult treatment that causes him severe vomiting, sometimes to the point of nearly passing out. Purdie sometimes struggles to interact with people and carry on conversations.

But he’s become an advocate for Valley fever awareness and has been able to resume working again. He works for the Valley Fever Institute as a patient and program development coordinator.

“I have a really severe form of Valley fever,” he said. “The disease can be very terrifying and very debilitating. But I don’t want people to be afraid of it. I want people to be aware of it.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 Underground resistance in Russia?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.yahoo.com/news/mystery-man-vowing-putin-friends-075924255.html">https://www.yahoo.com/news/mystery-man-vowing-putin-friends-075924255.html</a>
GIST	<p>Almost a decade after he was exiled, a former Russian statesman has emerged from the shadows this week as a new thorn in the side of <a href="#">the Kremlin</a>.</p> <p>In a shocking televised address from Kyiv last week, 47-year-old ex-politician <a href="#">Ilya Ponomarev</a> debuted as a self-described messenger for what he says is an underground resistance movement operating in Russia, the National Republican Army. Ponomarev read the group’s so-called manifesto on a Kyiv-based TV channel he founded seven months ago, called February Morning, in which they claimed responsibility for the car bomb that killed <a href="#">Darya Dugina</a>, the daughter of Russian nationalist and staunch Putin ally Alexander Dugin.</p> <p>“The activists chose a sacred figure of Russian fascism and that’s not up to me to criticize the target of their deed,” Ponomarev said in an interview with The Daily Beast, claiming that he’s been in contact with the “resistance fighters” since April. Besides passing their messages along, Ponomarev said his “job is to provide commercial support” to the group as needed.</p> <p>Ponomarev’s connection to the alleged partisan movement is murky, and he hasn’t been able to provide evidence that they had a role in the attack on Dugina. But that hasn’t stopped a wave of press coverage spotlighting Ponomarev’s allegations and fueling skepticism that Russian citizens could be behind the car bomb incident. (Russia has since <a href="#">pinned the attack on a Ukrainian operative</a>, though Kyiv has denied any responsibility.)</p> <p>“We have been receiving videos and text messages from the Russian rebels about their actions nearly every day,” Ponomarev said. “They throw Molotov cocktails at military draft offices, blow up railroads, pop tires of cars with Russian pro-war symbols and attack activists who were collecting money for the war.”</p>

Ponomarev's associate at February Morning, Aleksey Baranovsky, a former supporter of ultra far-right organizations in Russia, told The Daily Beast that the media group received messages from the National Republican Army within an hour of the attack on Dugina in Moscow. He claimed that the group had asked Ponomarev to represent them and share their manifesto, in which they promised that "those who do not resign their power will be destroyed by us."

"The initiative came from the group. They acted absolutely autonomously. We do not call them terrorists, they are an army of rebels," Baranovsky told The Daily Beast. He said that about 10 employees of the channel gathered for a meeting with Ponomarev on Sunday to discuss his address. "He read the statement that we had received and commented on it."

Ponomarev first fled Russia in 2014 after being the only member of Russian parliament to vote against the annexation of occupied Crimea. He eventually settled in Kyiv, where he became the chief executive of a U.S. investment firm in the oil and gas industry in Ukraine, though without much success. He told The Daily Beast that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is what prompted him to launch his media group, manned exclusively by Russian exiles living in Ukraine. "My war began on that day," too, he told The Daily Beast.

Roman Popkov, the exiled former leader of Russia's far-left National Bolshevik party, told The Daily Beast he's convinced that the partisan group indeed exists. "I personally know maybe 10 people in the partisan movement in Russia... they are 20- to 25-year-old activists of both left and right political views," he told The Daily Beast. "The war has changed Ponomarev a lot. He was reading the manifesto with a stony face—we are all different now, after seeing horrific violence and atrocities during this war."

Some independent experts, however, have voiced skepticism about Ponomarev's claims and reputation. A Moscow-based specialist in radical activist groups, Alexander Verkhovsky, suspects that the group is only an army in Ponomarev's head.

"Of course, there are anti-war partisan groups in Russia. They throw Molotov cocktails, blow things up, but if they were united in some big army, they would have had at least some channel independent from Ponomarev on Telegram," Verkhovsky told The Daily Beast. "But let's see what else they do."

Ponomarev's long-time ally, ex-Russian MP Gennady Gudkov, however, said he had no doubts about a rebel movement consisting of Russian exiles in Ukraine, and that they might be linked to the partisan movement in Russia. "I could give you a guarantee that Ponomarev is not crazy and that he is not an agent of the Russian Federal Security Service, though there might be a power playing him in their interest," Gudkov told The Daily Beast, referring to suspicions that Ponomarev's so-called "partisan connections" are in fact undercover Kremlin operatives. "But I can also confirm that there are dozens of Russian exiles in Ukraine fighting the war against Putin's army and that Ponomarev knows these guys well."

Tetiana Popova, a Ukrainian politician and media expert, also has doubts about Ponomarev's story.

"We've known Ponomarev for many years, as a businessman mostly—we think that he might genuinely wish to see an armed rebel movement in Russia but his source can easily be a Russian Federal Security Service and the NRA could be their idea," she told The Daily Beast. "Besides, we do not understand why Dugin's family was chosen for a target. It is just a finger, not the hand of those fighting the war against Ukraine."

Russia was quick to claim they had solved the case of Dugina's assassination. On the eve of her funeral, the FSB accused a Ukrainian woman of carrying out the attack remotely from a Mini Cooper, alleging that she had brought her daughter along in the vehicle. "The whole thing looks like a badly staged show," Popov said.

Whether or not the Russian "investigation" holds any water, Ponomarev says he is already taking heat from those who don't buy his story or claim he's become too "radical." In his interview with The Daily Beast, Ponomarev complained that many of his long-time friends in the Russian opposition have turned



	<p>their backs on him after his announcement, adding that he's been kicked out of the Free Russia Forum scheduled to take place at the end of this month in Vilnius.</p> <p>"All of them, including Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Garry Kasparov, Yulia Latynina are afraid of dealing with me," Ponomarev said. But he insisted he won't let that stop him: "I am at war."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 China muted response US warships transit?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/29/asia/us-china-taiwan-strait-transit-intl-hnk-mic-ml/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/29/asia/us-china-taiwan-strait-transit-intl-hnk-mic-ml/index.html</a>
GIST	<p><b>Seoul, South Korea (CNN)</b>After United States House Speaker <a href="#">Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan</a> in early August, the Chinese military staged <a href="#">some of its biggest ever military exercises</a> around the island.</p> <p>Chinese warplanes swarmed across the Taiwan Strait and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) even fired missiles over <a href="#">Taiwan</a>, the democratically ruled island that the Chinese Communist Party claims as its sovereign territory despite having never controlled it.</p> <p>Those Chinese military exercises set what some analysts and officials feared might be a <a href="#">"new normal" across the strait</a>: A more permanent PLA presence ever closer to Taiwan.</p> <p>US officials, meanwhile, vowed Washington would stay the course and Chinese intimidation tactics would be challenged.</p> <p>On Sunday, the US Navy sent <a href="#">two guided-missile cruisers through the strait</a>, which China now claims as its "internal waters." The US and others maintain the strait is international waters under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.</p> <p>It was the first time in at least four years the US Navy had sent two cruisers through the strait, said Collin Koh, research fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, who has been keeping a database on the transits.</p> <p>"Having two instead of the usual one vessel to do this mission is certainly a 'bigger' signal of protest against not only Beijing's recent military exercises around Taiwan following the Pelosi visit, but also in response to Beijing's attempt to subvert the legal status of the waterway and the longstanding freedom of navigation rights through the area," Koh said.</p> <p>That the US warships made the transit Sunday was no surprise. They have made dozens of such voyages in recent years, and US officials had said transits would continue.</p> <p>What was surprising to analysts was the muted response from Beijing.</p> <p>The Chinese military's Eastern Theater Command said it monitored the two ships, maintained a high alert and was "ready to thwart any provocation."</p> <p>Even the state-run Global Times tabloid, known for its often jingoistic and staunchly nationalist editorials, said the presence of the two cruisers brought "no actual threat to China's security."</p> <p>Past transits have elicited a stronger response. After <a href="#">the destroyer USS Benfold went through the strait</a> in July, Col. Shi Yi, spokesman for the PLA's Eastern Theater Command, described the US as the "destroyer of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait."</p> <p>While earlier this month, the Chinese ambassador to Washington, Qin Gang, called on the US to halt naval transits, saying they intensify tensions and embolden "Taiwan independence separatist forces."</p> <p>"If there's any move damaging China's territorial integrity and sovereignty, China will respond," Qin told reporters in Washington in response to a question on possible upcoming transits.</p>

Koh, the analyst, noted Beijing's comparatively tame statements Sunday.

"Why didn't the Chinese go beyond that given their earlier strong opposition to Washington's professed intent to continue such transits?" he said, offering three possible factors.

Firstly, Beijing may be wary of "international blowback," as any attempt to curtail US Navy navigation through the strait could be seen as threatening the rights of vessels from other nations to go through the waterway.

Secondly, after the Pelosi visit to Taiwan, Beijing suspended key military communications channels with Washington, raising the risk of misunderstandings during any PLA Navy-US Navy interaction.

Thirdly, there are other areas where Washington and Beijing do cooperate, and China may not want to strain those, Koh said.

"It doesn't make sense to provoke further heightened tensions that can potentially escalate into a clash," he said.

Carl Schuster, a former director of operations at the US Pacific Command's Joint Intelligence Center in Hawaii, suggests a fourth possibility.

"I think (Chinese leader Xi Jinping) is going to avoid any action that might strengthen the Republicans' and other China hawks' chances in the upcoming elections. He doesn't want a House and Senate that may enact legislation that more strongly supports Taiwan, or limits Chinese investment and influence in the US," Schuster said.

Meanwhile, he said, the use of two cruisers in the latest strait transit might not be seen so much as a statement, but as reasonable military planning.

"Given China's threats and recent missile firings into international waters ... it does seem prudent to have two warships transit those waters together," Schuster said.

And expect the US Navy to go about business as usual with regular transits of the strait, he said.

"Under international law it is international waters and so there is no official dispute on its status," he said. "The US Navy transit makes that statement quietly and effectively."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 How bad is teacher shortage? Depends</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/us/schools-teacher-shortages.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/us/schools-teacher-shortages.html</a>
GIST	<p>The new fall semester has just begun in Mesa, Ariz., and Westwood High School is short on math teachers.</p> <p>A public school that serves more than 3,000 students in the populous desert city east of Phoenix, Westwood still has three unfilled positions in that subject. The principal, Christopher Gilmore, has never started the year there with so many math positions open.</p> <p>"It's a little bit unnerving," he said, "going into a school year knowing that we don't have a full staff." Westwood, where most students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, is one of many public schools across the United States that are opening their doors with fewer teachers than they had hoped for.</p> <p>According to one national survey by <a href="#">Education Week</a>, nearly three-fourths of principals and district officials said this summer that the number of teaching applicants was not enough to fill their open</p>

positions. Other surveys released this year have suggested that [parents are deeply concerned](#) about staffing and that many more [teachers are eyeing the exits](#).

But while the pandemic has created an urgent search for teachers in some areas, [not every district is suffering from shortages](#). The need for teachers is driven by a complicated interplay of demand and supply in a tight job market. Salary matters, and so does location: Well-paying suburban schools can usually attract more candidates.

If anything, experts say, the recent pandemic turmoil can be expected to worsen old inequities.

“It’s complex, and it does go back before the pandemic,” said Desiree Carver-Thomas, an analyst with the Learning Policy Institute. “Schools serving more students of color and students from low-income families bear the brunt of teacher shortages, oftentimes.”

For many years, it has also been particularly hard to find teachers for subjects like math and special education, or to fill spots at rural schools. And there has always been a dire need for more teachers of color in the United States. According to [federal data](#) collected during the school year ending in 2018, nearly 80 percent of public schoolteachers were white. Most of their students were not.

In Arizona, where starting salaries for teachers are [lower than the national average](#), the shortages are “severe” across the board, said Justin Wing, an assistant superintendent of human resources for Mesa Public Schools, the district where Mr. Gilmore works.

“I feel like it’s been that way for probably at least 10 years,” said Mr. Wing, who is also an analyst for the Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association. But this year, he added, seems even worse.

He attributes the problem in part to low pay, and he has watched districts in neighboring states, like Texas and Nevada, rub salt in the wound by advertising their teaching salaries on social media and on billboards along Arizona highways.

According to Mr. Wing’s [data](#) from the last school year, nearly four-fifths of teaching positions (measured in terms of full-time equivalencies) in Arizona schools had to be covered in less-than-ideal ways — by support staff, for example, or teachers in training.

And nearly one-third of positions remained vacant altogether, which often meant that existing teachers had to take on more classes.

The challenge for struggling districts is to cover positions in a way that not only fills seats but also serves students, said Tequilla Brownie, the chief executive of TNTP, a nonprofit that provides consulting services for districts on staffing and student achievement.

“Everybody right now is just talking about, frankly, warm bodies,” she said. “The quality of teachers still matters. You never will get to quality if you don’t get to quantity first.”

Over the past two years, several states including New Mexico, Florida, Alabama and Mississippi have tried to address or pre-empt shortages by [raising teacher salaries](#).

Others have loosened certification requirements. In Arizona, [a new law](#) makes it easier for aspiring teachers without bachelor’s degrees to gain work experience in the classroom. In Florida, where state officials last year [reported more than 4,000 teacher vacancies](#), some [military veterans](#) can be granted temporary teaching certificates.

And in some rural districts, where raises may be out of reach, school officials are putting entire school days on the chopping block.



In Missouri, where teachers receive [among the lowest](#) salaries on average in the country, John Downs, the superintendent of the rural Hallsville School District, said that the pool of qualified applicants has all but dried up in recent years. A few days before the start of the school year, positions in speech language pathology and math were still unfilled.

This year, Hallsville schools are trying to entice educators with a four-day workweek. “We’re competing against more affluent districts who can offer more lucrative salary benefit packages,” Mr. Downs said. “So we decided we needed to think outside of the box.”

Hallsville is not alone. In Missouri, [25 percent of all districts will be on a four-day schedule](#) this fall. The condensed week is common in New Mexico, Colorado, Oregon, Idaho and South Dakota, and is beginning to emerge in other states like Texas.

Even before the pandemic, the number of schools on the four-day model grew to more than 1,600 in 2019 from 257 schools in 1999, [according to national data](#) compiled by Paul Thompson, an associate professor of economics at Oregon State University.

“As a smaller district, we just could not compete monetarily” with larger districts, said Kate Wright, a parent of two children in elementary and middle school, who hoped Hallsville’s new schedule would draw strong applicants. “It’s kind of hard to expect a teacher to want to drive out to Hallsville for less pay.”

It remains unclear how the four-day model — which has longer school days but shorter weeks — affects learning. While children and families may benefit from the flexibility of a three-day weekend, [some research suggests](#) that student achievement can suffer if the total number of instructional hours [significantly drops](#).

Shauna Woods, a third-grade teacher in Hallsville, said educators were looking forward to Mondays off — especially on the heels of two challenging years helping students navigate the pandemic. In anticipation of the change, she said, “the one thing that teachers kept talking about in my district was, ‘It won’t be like this next year. It will be better next year.’”

While the shortages in many districts are alarming, said Kim A. Anderson, the executive director of the National Education Association, the news has not been all bad.

“We are, in fact, making progress with respect to the educator shortage,” she said, adding that increased funding from districts, as well as the American Rescue Plan, passed by Congress in March 2021, were helping to turn the tide.

In Virginia, where starting salaries for teachers tend to be higher than the national average, Prince William County Public Schools, one of the state’s largest districts, offers more than \$53,000 to new teachers with bachelor’s degrees. Teachers with experience or graduate degrees can make tens of thousands more.

Lisa Harris, an algebra teacher in the district’s Patriot High School in Nokesville, said she had been teaching for 22 years and has never wanted to leave the profession. “As far as teacher shortages, of course I see the news,” she said. “You hear it nationally. I know of it. But honestly, at Prince William County Schools, I don’t see a lot of that.”

In fact, many schools in Prince William County saw just the opposite. For the current school year, which began on Aug. 22, the district created hundreds of new positions for teachers and teaching assistants compared with last year.

All year round, administrators keep an eye out for potential applicants — especially those with certifications in math, science, special education and multilingual education.

“This is a joke among those of us that work in H.R.,” said Michelle Colbert, who works in human resources at the district. “When you go to a college fair, and you see one math candidate, then it’s like every person in the room is making their way to that candidate.”

In fact, in some districts, teacher vacancies can be attributed not only to turnover but also to the creation of new positions, said Richard Ingersoll, an expert on education staffing with the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

That can skew perceptions of shortages, especially in the context of long-term trends. The total number of people working in public education has mostly grown for about a decade, [federal data](#) show, partly in recovery from widespread losses after the 2008 recession. And the number of teachers has grown faster than the number of students, [Dr. Ingersoll’s research has found](#). (That may continue. [Student enrollment slumped](#) during the pandemic, and it [may continue to shrink](#) in coming years because of demographic changes.)

But in places with chronically low pay, the pandemic has only worsened teachers’ feelings of being undervalued, said Brent Maddin, who leads the [Next Education Workforce initiative](#) for teachers at Arizona State University. “If we’re serious about recruiting people into the profession, and retaining people in the profession, in addition to things like compensation we need to be focused on the working conditions,” he said.

As the fall semester begins, principals like Mr. Gilmore in Mesa are focused not only on filling open positions, but also on keeping the educators they have. Westwood could use three more math teachers, but 23 of them are already there, introducing students to the basics of algebra, geometry and trigonometry.

Mr. Gilmore has also been working with Dr. Maddin at Arizona State to implement a teaching model where educators with different skills work together to teach larger groups of students. The program, Mr. Gilmore said, allows student teachers — potential future applicants — to gain experience at the school, and it may also help experienced educators feel less isolated in the classroom.

“I think the pandemic just brought exhaustion to an already stressed field,” Mr. Gilmore said. “And when we bring that joy of teaching back, the students will have the joy of learning.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Office’s last stand: flexibility or rebellion?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/business/the-offices-last-stand.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/business/the-offices-last-stand.html</a>
GIST	<p>Colleen McCreary recently gave managers at Credit Karma a message that could seem more apt for rising sixth graders than personal finance executives.</p> <p>“Back to school is coming,” Ms. McCreary, the company’s chief people officer, recalled telling managers. “We’re getting excited about all of these returning-in-the-fall type activities.”</p> <p>The company has been trying to get employees back to the office regularly for more than a year. First, the vaccine rollout gave executives hope that the office would be full again. Then there was “Wine Down Wednesday” in the company’s Charlotte, N.C., location, and kombucha by the firepit in the Oakland, Calif., building. Now Credit Karma’s leaders are relying on a different incentive: Labor Day. The latest corporate magical thinking is that September will herald the grand refilling of cubicles around the country.</p> <p>Each pandemic fall has brought with it employers’ hopes of a broad-scale return to the office. Last year’s plans were derailed by the Delta variant. But this time, business leaders are adamant that they won’t change course. <a href="#">Seriously</a>.</p>

“I don’t like to take attendance or babysit, but managers should know where their people are,” Ms. McCreary said, adding that since February employees have been asked to come in at least a few days a week, though the number is not specified and different teams set their own guidelines.

It’s been more than two years since the rules of the working world snapped. On all sides of the debate over returning to the office, the stakes feel high as ever. More than one-third of U.S. workers who can do their jobs from home want to stay permanently remote, according to recent data from [Gallup](#). Meanwhile, executives realize that if they don’t persuade their employees to come back now, with pandemic restrictions eased in most areas, the new norms of flexible work will be hard to unstick. So, some sense a standoff coming. Bosses say the office deadlines are real; workers are testing just how much they mean that.

“Many leaders have had decades of experience having all the answers,” said Sheela Subramanian, vice president of Future Forum, a Slack-backed research consortium. “That’s why you’re seeing a lot of these top down mandates of ‘you will do this,’ and the inevitable resistance to that.”

“I have seen an increased resolve among executives to figure out what’s next,” she added.

It’s either the end of an era of mute button fails, hybrid hiccups and making it up as we go along — or the beginning of outright rebellion.

“I don’t think there will be a big grand return to office,” said Christine Ratcliff, who works in online education and lives in Littleton, Colo. “It seems like a trickle.”

Ms. Ratcliff switched jobs last year and applied only for roles that would let her stay fully remote. She considers herself a night owl and bristles at the thought of a position requiring her to be alert early in the day. She feels comfortable at the desk in her one-bedroom apartment, seated under a whiteboard on which she has scrawled affirmations like “routine, not schedule.”

“I could see one company being like, ‘OK, today is the day we’re doing it, if we lose people we lose people,’” Ms. Ratcliff continued. “But in the culture as a whole it’s probably going to be a constant struggle.”

Some major companies brought workers back to the office in recent months, as the winter’s Omicron wave ebbed, including American Express, Microsoft and Goldman Sachs. But during the summer, workers took long-delayed vacations or worked from home more often, making offices feel ghostly quiet. Earlier this year, office attendance on Fridays was at 30 percent, far lower than it was on Wednesdays at 46 percent, according to data from Kastle.

Stephanie Dukes, the director of engineering at Credit Karma, said when she came in on summer Fridays she sometimes sat in the office social hub, called “The Spot,” because the area by her desk was too empty.

People were working remotely about 35 percent of the time this spring, according to a national [survey](#) from Stanford and other institutions. That is more than employers had expected. The same survey found that companies had planned for their employees to be remote just 30 percent of the time by 2022.

In general, it’s been a period of surprises for business leaders — who are sometimes realizing they don’t know where their employees are working, even if they know it isn’t the office.

“One organization I spoke to had employees update their mailing address because they were sending out sweatshirts,” said Steve Black, chief strategy officer at the H.R. technology company Topia. “They found people in random places around the globe.”

“There’s been a little bit of ostrich burying its head in the sand, a bit of ‘we’re trying to keep people safe and do our best,’” he added. “We’re starting to see folks formalize their policies.”

A number of companies, including Apple, Capital One, Comcast and The New York Times Company, are setting fresh guidelines around returning to the office for September.

For many workers, a fresh push from bosses means new forms of pushback. Chris Campbell, who manages a team at an advertising agency in Minneapolis, has been required to go into the office one day a week since May. This summer, executives at his agency have been discussing ramping up the return to office to two days a week, while Mr. Campbell keeps emphasizing how much he has gained from the freedoms of remote work.

“You’re able to be so much more present with your child and your partner,” he said. “And your dog.” (His is named Frida, a German wirehaired pointer with bushy brows.)

Mr. Campbell has assured his own direct reports they shouldn’t feel pressured to commute in, and gave two permission to leave Minneapolis and go permanently remote. “People are going to resist it pretty heavily,” he said broadly of return to office plans. “But it’s a pretty uphill battle.”

At Credit Karma, which has more than 1,500 employees, company leaders have persistently faced resistance on returning to the office. During several full-staff video meetings in 2020, Ms. McCreary recalled, leaders spent nearly all their time fielding questions about remote work. Much of the opposition she heard came from workers who said they were productive at home, found it easier to have a personal life with remote work and saw some competitors take the leap to permanent flexibility. The company terminated two employees for working in locations where the business isn’t authorized to operate.

“It’s always, ‘Google is doing XYZ,’ or ‘Facebook is doing XYZ,’ or ‘Small start-up down the street is doing XYZ,’ why can’t we?” Ms. McCreary said. “We’re very clear this is the choice we’ve made, and if people want to make another choice there are lots of opportunities for people from Credit Karma to go work somewhere else.”

Some Credit Karma employees have embraced the company’s approach on returning to the office, which sets the expectation that they work in person but allows them to pick which days. Patrick Kennedy, 28, a growth technology manager, joined the firm in February after leaving his previous job at a cable company because he had to work in person on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. He said he often couldn’t get an exemption to stay home when last-minute child care obligations arose, while at Credit Karma he has more flexibility.

Mr. Kennedy now goes into the office frequently because he feels energized by his morning routine of bopping desk to desk, trash-talking his office Ping-Pong opponents and finding colleagues who share his “Stranger Things” obsession.

“I’ll get someone on my team, we’ll stop and see Scotty who hired me, we’ll take the elevator to the eighth floor to say hi, chitchat,” Mr. Kennedy said. “I’m eager to get to work just because when something happens, I have to inform them of my own personal life gossip.”

At many companies, including Credit Karma, leaders have felt a growing sense of urgency to make their work arrangements more concrete, given the logistical bumps in that hazy middle ground between fully remote and fully in-person work. A recent survey of human resources professionals showed that 39 percent had found an employee working in a location where their business didn’t have tax approval to operate.

Comcast and NBCUniversal are shifting into a newly detailed return-to-office plan in September, in which U.S. office-based employees are asked to be in person on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Previously, management asked employees to be in the office several days a week but didn't specify which days, and some were finding it challenging to see their teammates.

At Apple, some employees recently circulated a petition demanding the option to keep working remotely after Labor Day: "This uniform mandate from senior leadership does not consider the unique demands of each job role nor the diversity of individuals," members of the group Apple Together wrote.

Apple declined to comment on the petition.

Beyond the white-collar work force, which is centered in larger cities where people have longer commutes, a lot of people are working in person. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that last month just 7 percent of Americans worked from home at some point because of Covid. Researchers point out, though, that this figure underestimates the extent of remote work. The survey asks people whether they are working from home because of Covid. But more and more people are working from home not because of Covid, but because of the way the pandemic reshaped the norms of work.

Zoe Sands, who works at a financial services firm in Denver doing internal audits, learned that management wanted her to start coming in once a week starting in May. Then she heard the company is hoping to build up to three days a week by later this year. She has decided that she would try to negotiate with her manager if she is asked to come in more than two days.

Ms. Sands feels most at ease when she can wake up at 7:15 a.m., drink a Yerba Mate and immediately start answering emails without devoting time to doing her hair and makeup. Going into the office means spending part of her morning rooting through her closet looking for an outfit that doesn't make her feel self-conscious.

"One day I was really stressed out because I couldn't find anything to wear," she said. "I was like, that's a really dumb way to call in and not go to the office, because I'm having a wardrobe malfunction."

But the strain of trying to remake lives and routines is far from trivial. In conversations with more than three dozen people, it is clear that many can't picture squeezing themselves back into office life with all its constraints, from the discomfort of blazers to the sting of a hallway slight. Others are increasingly desperate to return to the version of working life that existed before the pandemic and can't imagine entirely letting go of their in-person relationships.

As summer fades, people are increasing attempts to articulate those workplace needs. Mr. Campbell, for example, said he has been raising concerns about returning to the office with his managers, emphasizing the prospect of the company losing out on talent because its competitors are embracing more flexibility.

Mr. Campbell has listened to his colleagues who ask: With the business winning awards and growing its client pool, what's the point in returning to old ways of working? While he has made his own reservations clear, Mr. Campbell worries that company leaders have made up their minds.

"There's some sort of cultural linkage to August and September being the time people want to go back," he added. "It's tied to that, 'We'll get through summer and then we have real work to do.'"

With two years of return-to-office wrangling under their belts, some managers are feeling more confident about spelling out their expectations, both to their employees and to job applicants.

"I've had conversations with candidates where they're very much like 'I would prefer to work remote.' Then I have people at the opposite end of the spectrum," said Ms. Dukes, 40, the director of engineering at Credit Karma.

"Sometimes there are situations where we're not going to align with a candidate," she added. "That happens."

HEADLINE	08/29 China tech self-reliance runs into reality
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/technology/china-semiconductors-technology.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/technology/china-semiconductors-technology.html</a>
GIST	<p>Wearing a laboratory coat, China's top leader, Xi Jinping, inspected a subsidiary of Yangtze Memory Technologies Company, a national semiconductor company based in Wuhan. It was April 2018, shortly after the U.S. government had barred the Chinese telecommunications firm ZTE from doing business with American suppliers.</p> <p>The ban was a Sputnik moment for China's tech industry and its leaders. Despite the country's success in building smartphones, e-commerce platforms and high-speed railways, they realized that tech boom had been built largely on top of Western technologies, especially chips that power nearly everything. They had to change that — and fast.</p> <p>Mr. Xi told the executives of Yangtze Memory, or YMTC, that semiconductors were as important for manufacturing as hearts for humans. "When your heart isn't strong, no matter how big you are, you're not really strong," state media reported him saying. He urged them to hurry and make tech breakthroughs to contribute to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.</p> <p>Mr. Xi has repeated that message ever since, with growing urgency as the United States tries to restrict China's access to key semiconductor technologies. But a series of corruption investigations last month into the who's who of the country's semiconductor industry suggest that Mr. Xi may not be getting what he expected, or at least not quickly enough.</p> <p>Those under investigation include the former chairman of YMTC who showed Mr. Xi around on the 2018 visit, and the head of a giant state fund, known as the Big Fund, which has invested in dozens of China's biggest chip projects.</p> <p>The firms they led are at the heart of the country's push into semiconductors, the little slices of silicon that act as the brains of computers and other devices. Their downfalls are a public acknowledgment that China is rethinking its gold rush approach of throwing cash at projects in the hope that some work out. And it's a clear setback for the country's drive to become technologically self-sufficient.</p> <p>Behind the purge lies a tension between Mr. Xi's vision of government-led tech self-reliance and the very nature of semiconductors.</p> <p>The chip industry is highly complex and interconnected. It depends on an integrated global supply chain and draws upon expertise from different regions: design in the United States; manufacturing in Taiwan and South Korea; assembly, packaging and testing in China; and equipment from the Netherlands. The comparative advantages of each region were built with decades of capital expenditure and research and development.</p> <p>"Any government considering a push for self-reliance in semiconductors needs to face the harsh reality," said Christopher A. Thomas, a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and Intel's former general manager in China, in an interview. "Semiconductors represent the highest form of human engineering achievement. They are the most difficult thing we create as a species. How can one country 'win it all' by itself?"</p> <p>Charles Kau, a Taiwanese semiconductor veteran who has worked on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, said in a recent newspaper interview that he had tried telling mainland tech executives many times that it could take China 30 — or even 50 — years to become an industry leader.</p> <p>Such statements aren't likely to be what Mr. Xi wants to hear. Expected to secure a third term at an important Communist Party congress this year, he is increasingly obsessed with tech "choke points" that have left China vulnerable amid the trade war with the United States, including bans on companies like ZTE, the potential war over the Taiwan Strait and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This month, President</p>



Biden signed into law a \$280 billion bill aimed at strengthening domestic semiconductor manufacturing, design and research to compete with China.

To confront these challenges, Mr. Xi has increasingly reached back to Mao Zedong's playbook when China was operating a planned economy and had few friends and self-reliance was a necessity. He doesn't hide his fondness for the Mao era's top-down approach to tackling big obstacles: mobilizing national resources, which he claims is a big advantage of China's state-dominating political system.

Such inward and backward vision has come to define Mr. Xi's views on how China should advance to become self-sufficient in tech and how fast. He has promoted technocrats from the space and defense industries who pulled off technologically challenging projects that he believes testify to the strength of China's system.

The purged semiconductor executives didn't live up to that criterion.

Zhao Weiguo, the YMTC chairman who stood behind Mr. Xi in a widely circulated photo of his 2018 visit, used to be the most high-profile person in the industry. He earned the nickname "semiconductor madman" after making a series of eye-popping investments in big chip projects through the company he controlled, Tsinghua Unigroup. He is best known in the West for his failed 2015 takeover of Micron Technology, a U.S. maker of memory chips.

The other man under investigation, who is equally influential, is Ding Wenwu, head of the Big Fund, which became Beijing's vehicle for doling out capital to chip makers.

At least five other executives who worked with the two men are also under investigation on corruption allegations. So is Xiao Yaqing, minister of industry and information technology, who oversaw the sector, though it's unclear whether the three sets of investigations are related.

The results of the Big Fund and Tsinghua Unigroup, which the Chinese government used to steer the development of the domestic chips industry, have been a mixed bag.

China's chip makers made more progress in the past five years than the previous decade, people in the industry said. In 2020, the country's chip sales grew 30.6 percent to reach \$39.8 billion, according to an analysis by the Semiconductor Industry Association, a trade organization and lobbying group in Washington.

But much of the headway was in the lower end of the very long product chain in semiconductors, and gaps in more advanced market segments remain large and could take years or even decades to close. China still spends more on chips than on any other imported good.

And there have been failures despite — or because of — tons of government money and subsidies. In the first 10 months of 2020, more than 58,000 firms registered as chip-related enterprises, according to an analysis by China Economic Weekly, a magazine affiliated with the Communist Party's official newspaper, People's Daily. Some of the companies used to be in fashion, construction and other sectors, and changed their registration information only to gain access to easy money and cheap land, the magazine said. At least six semiconductor projects that boasted \$1 billion investments went bust.

Then there's Mr. Zhao's Tsinghua Unigroup, which started unraveling under a mountain of debt in late 2020. It was taken over this year by a Beijing-based firm, which was formed by a consortium led by investment companies, in a nearly \$9 billion deal.

Amid the chaos, the Big Fund, which has raised nearly \$50 billion since its inception in 2014, seemed to be performing well financially. Mr. Ding, the head of the fund, said in a 2017 interview that it needed to both serve the nation's strategic goals and make a profit. But critics accused it of investing in safe bets instead of risky projects that could lose money for a while but eventually make a technological difference.

It's not hard to imagine that Beijing looked at these results and found the performance underwhelming. There appeared to be too much greed and not enough patriotic dedication — the opposite of what Mr. Xi likes to see.

Mr. Xi has repeatedly said he would like to see more achievements like the “two bombs and one satellite” of the 1960s and 1970s, when China developed its own nuclear and hydrogen bombs and first satellite despite poor economic conditions and a hostile international environment.

Since 2019, the phrase “new whole nation system” has also started appearing in Mr. Xi's speeches and party documents in the context of conquering key tech challenges. The system is a relic from China's planned-economy period between the 1950s and 1970s, during which the government mobilized and allocated resources through administrative command. The new whole nation system will combine the benefits of government command and market forces, many party theorists have argued.

China's many recent successes in the space and defense projects are likely examples of what Mr. Xi believes the country can accomplish with the new whole nation system and the “two bombs and one satellite” spirit. In 2021, China landed a rover on Mars and sent astronauts to a new space station.

In a move that some believe hints at Mr. Xi's thinking on semiconductors, in July he appointed the official who led the development of the first Chinese-built passenger jetliner to replace the minister of industry and information technology, who is under investigation.

Some critics have cautioned against a top-down approach in semiconductors because of the global complexity.

Liu Yadong, the former editor in chief of the official Science and Technology Daily, said in an interview in May that the whole nation system helped China win Olympic golden medals and build atomic bombs, “but it's not fit for building semiconductor chips.”

Mr. Xi keeps pressing ahead. In June, he visited another semiconductor company in Wuhan. He stressed that tech self-reliance was the foundation of China's prosperity and the key to national security.

“We must take the technology lifeline in our own hands,” he said. “If every city, every high-tech development district, every tech company and every researcher can follow the government's guidance in tech innovation, we will definitely be able to achieve the goal.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 NYC struggles cope busloads of migrants</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/us/new-york-city-migrants-buses/2022/08/28/id/1084979/">https://www.newsmax.com/us/new-york-city-migrants-buses/2022/08/28/id/1084979/</a>
GIST	<p>New York City officials have so far failed to open a shelter in Manhattan they had hoped to have operating two weeks ago in order to take care of recent migrants that Texas has sent by bus to the Big Apple, the <a href="#">New York Post</a> reported Sunday.</p> <p>New York's Department of Homeless Services (DHS) told the Post its initial plan to operate an intake and processing center for the migrants from Texas next to a 600-room shelter at a hotel in Midtown is no longer viable, explaining only they have managed to choose a finalist to operate a Manhattan facility without stating the contractor's name or where it will be located.</p> <p>DHS also acknowledged it has not chosen and rented any of the 5,000 hotel rooms it is seeking to house migrants across New York City.</p> <p>The temporary solution officials are using is, in the meantime, to co-mingle migrants with New Yorkers in the city's existing shelter system. Although officials have refused to say how much the city is spending on housing migrants in this way, a New York Post study found it could be more than \$300 million.</p>

In addition, NYC officials have been struggling to find solutions for healthcare for the migrants, as well as schooling for their children, [CBC](#) reported.

Some 6,000 migrants have sought shelter with the city since May, including many sent by bus from Texas by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott as a protest against the Biden administration's immigration policies, according to the Post.

New York Mayor Eric Adams has not received any extra help to deal with the matter, despite his appeals to the White House and United States Conference of Mayors for assistance.

DHS spokeswoman Neha Sharma told The Post that "we are working at an extraordinary speed to bring emergency capacity online while doing everything we can to comprehensively address the unique needs of recently arrived asylum seekers who are coming to us in their greatest hour of need."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Concern: Northeast low fuel inventories</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/heating-oil-diesel-inventories-low-in-northeast-192f998c29bcb05fd0fcd4f680f1faf6">https://apnews.com/article/heating-oil-diesel-inventories-low-in-northeast-192f998c29bcb05fd0fcd4f680f1faf6</a>
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Diesel and heating oil supplies in the Northeast are more than 50% below the recent average, raising concerns that an extreme weather event could cause supply disruptions, federal officials said.</p> <p>Fuel supplies are lower than normal across the country for a variety of reasons, including the war in Ukraine. But it's the worst in the Northeast.</p> <p>Diesel fuel and heating oil, which comprise the distillate category, are 63% below the five-year average in New England and 58% below the same average from Maryland to New York, according to a survey by the Department of Energy. Gasoline inventories are not as bad, but are still at their lowest levels in nearly a decade along the entire East Coast, the agency said.</p> <p>The Northeast is heavily dependent on heating oil to keep homes warm in the winter, while other regions rely more on natural gas and electricity. Also, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has projected an active hurricane season, and a powerful weather event could cause disruptions, since most fuel consumed from the Middle Atlantic states to Maine comes from Gulf Coast refineries, energy officials say.</p> <p>Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm is convening a meeting of New England governors and their energy directors after Labor Day to discuss the situation. In the meantime, she has urged governors in a letter to take whatever steps they can to shore up fuel supplies in coming weeks to prevent any problems.</p> <p>The Energy Department also sent letters to seven major oil companies, asking them to hold onto their stocks to help offset low stocks.</p> <p>The federal agency has been monitoring the problem and is attempting to be proactive with outreach. But there's little incentive for buyers to stock up on high-priced fuel for storage because it is anticipated that prices will drop, said Michael Ferrante, of the Massachusetts Energy Marketers Association.</p> <p>The fuel inventory concerns come against a backdrop of Russian's invasion of Ukraine further shaking up an energy supply chain that was seeking to catch up with growing demand. The war is causing worries about the adequacy of energy supplies around the world.</p> <p>In New England, the immediate concern in the late summer is diesel fuel, but the winter heating season looms not far behind.</p>

	<p>Heating oil disruptions would hit the region hard because the percentage of homes that rely on it range from 24% in Massachusetts to more than 60% in Maine, the most heavily dependent states.</p> <p>Maine Gov. Janet Mills, a Democrat, has urged the Energy Department to expedite its meeting with governors to talk about maintaining a stable heating oil supply.</p> <p>Maine is “distinctly vulnerable to the increased prices and volatility the global fossil fuel market is now experiencing due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine,” said Anthony Ronzio, a spokesperson for the Mills administration.</p> <p>Despite the concern, wholesale suppliers and retailers are working well together, and Ferrante said he anticipates inventories will increase in September and October, easing the immediate concerns.</p> <p>He said he is optimistic that there will be an ample supply of heating oil.</p> <p>“Suppliers and retail delivery companies are concerned about prices and inventory, but there’s not any alarm bell being rung at this time,” he said. “I don’t see a crisis at this point.”</p> <p>The Energy Department created a heating oil reserve that holds 1 million barrels in terminals in the Northeast. Those could be tapped in an emergency.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 Pakistan pleads for international help</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/29/asia/pakistan-floods-rescue-devastation-intl-hnk/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/29/asia/pakistan-floods-rescue-devastation-intl-hnk/index.html</a>
GIST	<p><b>Islamabad (CNN)</b> <a href="#">Pakistan</a> is racing to prevent further loss of life as it reels from one of its worst climate disasters with floodwater threatening to cover up to a third of the country of 220 million people by the end of the monsoon season.</p> <p>Climate change minister Sherry Rehman said Sunday the unprecedented rain had created a "climate catastrophe" with floodwaters submerging homes, destroying farmland and displacing millions of people. "We've had to deploy the navy for the first time to operate in Indo-Pakistan, because much of it resembles a small ocean," she told German broadcaster Deutsche Welle.</p> <p>On Monday, the death toll reached 1,061 since mid-June, according to the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), as the unrelenting rain raised fears of more fatalities to come.</p> <p>"By the time this is over, we could well have one quarter or one third of Pakistan under water," Rehman told Turkish news outlet TRT World on Thursday.</p> <p>On Monday, new satellite images from Maxar Technologies showed the scale of the disaster -- homes and fields completely submerged along the Indus River, as well as the cities of Rajanpur and Rojhan in Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province.</p> <p>Video released by the Pakistan Army showed troops staging treacherous rescues by helicopter of people stranded in floodwaters -- including one boy trapped on rocks in the middle of a raging river in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.</p> <p>Rapid flash floods have destroyed more than 3,000 kilometers (1,864 miles) of road, 130 bridges and 495,000 homes have been damaged, according to NDMA's latest situation report, making access to flooded areas even more difficult.</p> <p>Foreign Minister Bilawal Butto-Zardari said Sunday this year's monsoon season had been "absolutely devastating."</p>

"I haven't seen any destruction or devastation of this scale," said Butto-Zardari. "I find it very difficult to put into words the phraseologies that we are used to, whether it's monsoon rains or flooding, doesn't quite seem to encapsulate the ongoing devastation and disaster that we are still witnessing."

### **A national calamity**

Pakistani Prime Minister [Shehbaz Sharif](#) joined in relief efforts over the weekend, dropping off supplies from a helicopter in areas difficult to reach by boat or land, according to videos from his office.

"Visiting flood affected areas and meeting people. The magnitude of the calamity is bigger than estimated," Sharif said in a [tweet](#) on Saturday. "Times demand that we come together as one nation in support of our people facing this calamity. Let us rise above our differences and stand by our people who need us today."

After meeting with ambassadors and diplomats in Islamabad on Friday, he called for help from the international community.

On Monday, Peter Ophoff, the IFRC head delegate in Pakistan said the aid network had appealed for more than \$25 million to provide urgent relief for an estimated 324,000 people in the country.

"Looking at the incredible damage the floods have caused, it slowly becoming clear to us that relief efforts are going to take a very long time. It is going to be a long-waterlogged road ahead when the people of Pakistan began their journey back to what is remaining of their homes," Ophoff said.

More than 3.1 million people had been displaced by the "sea-like" flood waters that have damaged more than half a million homes in multiple districts across the country, according to a statement Saturday from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Abrar ul Haq, chairman of the aid network in Pakistan, said Friday that water wasn't the only challenge for humanitarian workers in the region.

"These torrential floods have severely restricted transportation and mobility. The threat of Covid-19 and damage to vehicles, infrastructure and connectivity are further making our emergency relief works almost impossible. Most of those affected are also immobile or marooned making us hard to reach them," he said.

### **'Monster monsoon of the decade'**

Pakistan is already battling through its eighth cycle of monsoon rains, Rehman said Thursday, an anomaly in a country that typically sees three or four such rainy periods per year.

"Pakistan is living through one of the most serious climate catastrophes of the world," Rehman said in a video statement.

"We are at this point ground zero of the front line of extreme weather events, which we have seen from early this year from an unrelenting cascade of heat waves, forest fires, flash floods, multiple glacier lake outburst events and now the monster monsoon of the decade."

In his comments Sunday, Butto-Zardari said Pakistan was bearing the brunt of climate change as other countries with bigger carbon footprints do little to reduce their emissions.

"Pakistan contributes negligible amounts to the overall carbon footprint, but we are devastated by climate disasters such as these time and time again, and we have to adapt within our limited resources," he said.

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HEADLINE	08/28 'MacGyvered' weapons in Ukraine arsenal
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/us/politics/ukraine-weapons-russia.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/us/politics/ukraine-weapons-russia.html</a>

WASHINGTON — The billions of dollars in military aid the United States has sent Ukraine includes some of the most advanced and lethal weapons systems in the world. But Ukraine has also scored big successes in the war by employing the weapons and equipment in unexpected ways, and jury-rigging some on the fly, according to military experts.

From the sinking of [the Moskva](#), Russia's Black Sea flagship, in April to the attack on a [Russian air base in Crimea](#) this month, Ukrainian troops have used American and other weapons in ways few expected, the experts and Defense Department officials say.

By mounting missiles onto trucks, for instance, Ukrainian forces have moved them more quickly into firing range. By putting rocket systems on speedboats, they have increased their naval warfare ability. And to the astonishment of weapons experts, Ukraine has continued to destroy Russian targets with slow-moving [Turkish-made Bayraktar attack drones](#) and inexpensive, plastic aircraft modified to drop grenades and other munitions.

"People are using the MacGyver metaphor," said Frederick B. Hodges, a former top U.S. Army commander in Europe, in a reference to the 1980s TV show in which the title character uses simple, improvised contraptions to get himself out of sticky situations.

After six months of war, the death toll on both sides is high: While American officials estimate that up to 80,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded, Ukraine's outgunned military has said it is losing 100 to 200 troops a day. Even so, the engineering ingenuity of the Ukrainians lies in stark contrast to the slow, plodding, doctrinal nature of the Russian advance.

In the attack on the Moskva, for example, the Ukrainians developed their own anti-ship missile, called the Neptune, which they based on the design of an old Soviet anti-ship missile, but with substantially improved range and electronics. They appear to have mounted the Neptune missiles onto one or more trucks, according to one senior American official, and moved them within range of the ship, which was around 75 miles from Odesa. The striking of the Moskva was, in essence, the Neptune's proof of concept; it was the first time the new Ukrainian weapon was used in an actual war, and it took down Russia's flagship in the Black Sea.

"With the Moskva, they MacGyvered a very effective anti-ship system that they put on the back of a truck to make it mobile and move it around," General Hodges, who is now a senior adviser at Human Rights First, said in an interview.

Ukrainian troops have done so well with the Bayraktar drone, in fact, that the company's chief executive, Haluk Bayraktar, praised their ability to "squeeze as much as possible out of these systems," in a recent interview with a Ukrainian news program. American military officials remain puzzled by why Russia's many-layered air defense systems have not been more effective in stopping the drones, which have no self-defense systems, are easily spotted by radar and cruise at only about 80 miles an hour.

A senior Pentagon official said Ukrainian forces had put American-supplied HARM anti-radiation missiles on Soviet-designed MiG-29 fighter jets — something that no air force had ever done. The American HARM missile, designed to seek and destroy Russian air defense radar, is not usually compatible with the MiG-29 or the other fighter jets in Ukraine's arsenal.

Ukraine managed to rejigger targeting sensors to allow pilots to fire the American missile from their Soviet-era aircraft. "They have actually successfully integrated it," the senior official told reporters during a Pentagon briefing. He spoke on the condition of anonymity per Biden administration rules.

Officials say the missiles can target Russian air defense systems up to 93 miles away.

The craftiness is now on display in Crimea. In recent weeks, Ukraine has targeted the Black Sea peninsula, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014, in a series of attacks.



In the strike on the Russian air base, Ukrainian forces destroyed eight fighter jets. A few days later, clandestine Ukrainian fighters operating behind enemy lines hit several sites in the occupied territory that Russia had thought were safe, including ammunition depots and supply lines.

Then, blasts hit a military airfield outside Sevastopol, the largest city in Crimea and home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Russia claimed that the booms from the strike were the sound of successful antiaircraft fire.

"The Ukrainians are able to exploit their knowledge in the area," said Dara Massicot, a senior policy researcher with the RAND Corporation.

This exploitation is rooted in Ukraine's history as the heart of the former Soviet Union's defense industry. For decades, Ukraine was the place where the Soviet Union — and then Russia — developed turbines for warships, tanks and even aircraft, like the Antonov An-124, which is one of the largest cargo planes in the world and is used by Russia to transport weapons to Ukraine.

American military commanders who have worked with Ukrainian troops say that the Ukrainians are always ready to improvise.

General Hodges said he noticed "on a tactical level how clever Ukrainians were" when he worked with them in 2013 and 2014. He said the adaptation of the American-supplied HARM missiles to work on MiGs demonstrated the depth of technological know-how in Ukraine's military.

"You can't just hang any kind of rocket off of any kind of plane — there's a whole lot of avionics and other aspects of flying and high-performance aircraft that are involved here," he said. "And they did it."

The attacks in Crimea underscore Ukraine's increasingly aggressive military tactics, as the government in Kyiv has relied on special forces and local partisan fighters to strike deep behind the front, disrupt Russian supply lines and counter Russia's advantages in arms and equipment.

American officials say the United States has provided detailed intelligence to help Ukraine's forces attack Russian targets throughout the war. But Ukraine conducted the first of the recent strikes in Crimea — a series of blasts at the Saki military airfield on Aug. 9 — without notifying American and other Western allies in advance, officials said.

Indeed, one American official later briefed on the attacks said Ukrainian commandos and partisan fighters had used an improvised array of weapons, explosives and tactics in the strikes.

"It's all homegrown," the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss operational details. "We did not get any advance notice."

That first strike at the airfield destroyed much of the air power and munitions stores of the Black Sea Fleet's 43rd naval aviation regiment. It was also intended to have a psychological impact on Russian forces in Crimea, the U.S. official said, calling it the "Doolittle Effect," a reference to an American attack on Japan in World War II.

The bomber raid led by Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle was a low-level daylight attack in April 1942 that resulted in only light damage to military and industrial targets. But it buoyed an American home front reeling from a string of setbacks in the Pacific, beginning with the Pearl Harbor attack on Dec. 7, 1941. It also shattered the idea that Japan was invulnerable to American air attacks, as its government had claimed.

In a Telegram post after the Saki strike, Andriy Tsaplienko, a Ukrainian military journalist, said the damage suggested that a truck-mounted heavy missile launcher called the Grim, or Sapsan, had been used in the attack. That system was developed by Yuzhmash, a state-owned Ukrainian aerospace manufacturer. The Kremlin, however, rejected the possibility that a Ukrainian-made ballistic missile system had anything to do with it.

	<p>“The activities in the Crimean Peninsula likely mark a new phase in the war with the Ukrainians going on the offensive with an irregular warfare campaign designed to push Russia from an area they were sure was secure,” said Mick Mulroy, a former Pentagon official and C.I.A. officer.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 Ukraine's trains bind land fractured by war</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/world/europe/ukraine-war-trains.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/world/europe/ukraine-war-trains.html</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — A Polish friend offered some advice about taking the Ukrainian National Railways express train to Kyiv from Warsaw: Close the blinds before you go to bed, and sleep with your head by the door and away from the window. Better protection if an explosion blows it out.</p> <p>But 15 hours later, pulling into the imposing central station in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, at 1:12 p.m., exactly on time, perhaps the most remarkable thing about the journey was how ordinary it had been.</p> <p>Ukrainian trains have never stopped running, even in the pre-dawn hours when Russia's attack began six months ago. This week, when a <a href="#">missile struck a train in eastern Ukraine and killed at least 25 people</a>, service continued along the rest of the vast network that includes more than 12,000 miles of track. In a war bent on creating division, the rails offer vital connection.</p> <p>In early August, Olga Solovyova and her 8-year-old son, Misha, counted on that connection and returned to Kyiv for the first time since March. They fled Ukraine in the first weeks of the war, as did millions of others. After a journey that took them through Moldova, Romania and Hungary, they finally settled in Lodz, Poland.</p> <p>“His father is in Kyiv,” Ms. Solovyova, 38, said, sitting beside Misha on the bottom bunk of a three-bed sleeper cabin. “And so are his grandma and grandpa. He is so excited that he could not sleep.”</p> <p>In ways large and small, Ukrainian National Railways, with its 230,000 employees, has been a vital player in this war, helping to keep the nation bound together as Russia tries to tear it apart. The railway has enabled the flight of refugees and of those who are internally displaced, the movement of goods and weapons and the reunions of families.</p> <p>Six months in, with no end in sight, the war has carved fissures across Ukraine. They are not just geographic divides, like the front line that has hardened for now into a diagonal scar running across the nation's south and east. They are also rifts in thought: Despite ever-looming threats, a growing number of Ukrainians are returning — and some are choosing to stay — as they try to find rhythms of normal life in abnormal times. The railway helps make those rhythms possible.</p> <p>Because the Ukrainian rail system is built with wider-gauge tracks than the European network, the undercarriage of the cars has to be switched before the five-wagon train can move on toward Kyiv. Four hours of banging and clanging and two passport checks later, the train was rolling through Ukraine.</p> <p>As dawn broke, blinds were slowly lifted; the nighttime precaution taken to make it harder for Russians to target the train was no longer needed.</p> <p>Outside in the early morning light on a dirt road, a man pushed a bicycle stacked with produce. Otherwise, the countryside lay still.</p> <p>But the war raged elsewhere, and news filtered to the passengers. Phones flashed with social media posts about some of the first explosions to rock the Crimean Peninsula, as Ukraine struck deep into Russian-held territory. Ms. Solovyova read them anxiously. Her parents live in Crimea, which was illegally annexed by Moscow in 2014. They do not speak about the war, she said.</p>

“Because of all this Russian propaganda, my own father believes we are Nazis,” she said. When she sent him pictures of her and her son hiding in a bunker in the first week of the war, he did not believe that Russia was to blame.

She did not want to dwell on her own divided family. She was looking forward to returning and reuniting her son with his father.

“It is my home,” she said.

Ms. Solovyova is one of hundreds of thousands now making the journey back to Ukraine. The Warsaw-to-Kyiv train is sold out, more than a month in advance of its departure.

While 5.15 million refugees from Ukraine have entered Poland since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, about 3.25 million had returned home by August, according to the Polish border authorities and [SchengenVisaInfo.com](https://www.schengenvisa.info/).

On July 30, more people crossed from Poland into Ukraine than left Ukraine.

When a Russian naval blockade shut down Ukraine’s ports, the rail network offered a crucial way to export goods, helping to keep the economy from collapsing. But it has not been without problems. More than 13,000 rail cars stuffed with iron ore, chemicals, vegetable oil and other commodities are stuck at the Ukrainian-Polish border, caught in a web of logistical challenges and bureaucratic red tape, according to industry officials.

The movement of humanitarian aid into the country has been smoother. The trains have carried in more than 100,000 tons of food, water and medicine.

With Ukraine’s skies closed to air nonmilitary air traffic, trains have also been the travel mode of choice for visiting world leaders like Prime Minister Boris Johnson of Britain and Hollywood stars like Angelina Jolie. So many have made the journey by train to Kyiv to meet with President Volodymyr Zelensky that the practice has its own name: Iron Diplomacy.

The rails, carefully hidden from public view, are also a critical link in the military’s logistical chain.

Oleksandr Kamyshin, 38, the chief executive of Ukrainian Railways, was six months into the job when the war broke out.

Although more than 200 railway workers have died during the war — some while fighting on the front, some while at home during Russian shelling and others while working on the lines — he said there had been remarkably few episodes involving passenger trains.

The war-torn towns and cities of eastern Ukraine remain the most challenging to reach. Mr. Kamyshin said that each morning, there was shelling reported near about 10 stations in the region and that the railway takes special precautions — which he asked not be made public — in carrying out evacuations there. Away from the front, trains are running on time and safely.

The longest any train has been delayed is 12 hours, when, in the spring, Russia unleashed a fusillade of missiles at railroad infrastructure, taking out a key power source. Strikes on the lines themselves can often be repaired in under 30 minutes. When bridges are hit, trains can be quickly rerouted.

The conductor on the Kyiv express from Warsaw, Stanislav Shynkaruk, 49, has witnessed countless scenes of suffering and bravery over six months of war. He was happy to now be bringing people back into the country, and he was proud of his role in the war. Train employees, perhaps second only to soldiers, have earned a place in the hearts of many Ukrainians. They are routinely thanked for their service on the streets.

“Trains are made from iron,” he said. “So are the people who work on them.”

Anna Voychenko, 45, has been working on trains since she was a teenager, and on this trip, she was the conductor responsible for the passengers in Car 4. She was in her home in Chernihiv, north of Kyiv, when the invasion began and Russian warplanes attacked. She could not go anywhere. She did not want to flee, she said, but to go to work.

“On March 20, by some miracle, I was able to make it out,” she said. Since then, she has been riding the trains.

While Kyiv and other cities away from the front are slowly coming back to life, the choice about whether to return for the long term is agonizing.

Ms. Solovyova said her trip home was “quite emotional.”

“On the one hand, I have all of my stuff at home in the same places, and it seems like I was there yesterday,” she said in an email. “On the other hand, we have a war.”

Her son, Misha, spent his days in Kyiv with his father, Sergey Borodaienko.

“Both of them were happy,” she said. But she and Misha had to say goodbye again. The threat of Russian rockets and the looming prospect of a long, hard winter led her to decide to go back to Poland.

“My son was crying and trying to hide his tears,” she said in an email after returning to Poland. “A little boy with a toy in his hands and tears in the eyes. It breaks my heart.”

“Writing this, tears again are on my face,” she added.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Fall vax campaign new shots, worse access</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/health/covid-vaccines-money.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/health/covid-vaccines-money.html</a>
GIST	<p>Long past the point when pollsters said there were no more Americans willing to be vaccinated against the coronavirus, Coral Garner kept finding them.</p> <p>An organizer of mobile clinics for the Minnesota Department of Health, she arranged to provide vaccines and booster shots to people who had resisted them, setting up in a retrofitted city bus outside a Nigerian church, a Hmong senior center, a Somali mall and dozens of other sites.</p> <p>But even as the United States now prepares for a critical campaign to deliver Omicron-specific booster shots, Ms. Garner’s job no longer exists. In June, her contract position was canceled because the state said funding had dried up.</p> <p>At the very moment a better coronavirus vaccine is expected to finally become available, America’s vaccination program is feeling the effects of a long period of retreat.</p> <p>Local programs to bring shots to the places where Americans gather and the institutions they trust have folded, a consequence in some cases of congressional resistance to more pandemic response spending.</p> <p>The same local health department workers responsible for Covid and flu shots this fall have also, without new staffing, been juggling a monkeypox outbreak and childhood immunization deficits that have left some places susceptible to polio.</p> <p>And some state health officials, citing weak demand for vaccines and increased survival rates of late, said in interviews that they had stopped aggressively pushing coronavirus shots.</p>

With the virus killing far fewer people than it once did and many Americans reverting to their prepandemic ways, the country's no-expenses-spared attitude to saving lives has evolved into a response that has put a greater onus on individuals to protect themselves. In keeping with that approach, many health officials believe the vaccine machinery is in place to meet what they expect, lamentably, to be tepid demand this fall.

But others are worried that the country is surrendering a decisive opportunity to stoke that demand and restore the more robust vaccination efforts that lifted last year's initial rollout.

"We are watching the dismantling of the hyperlocal infrastructure that actually brought needles to arms in the most vulnerable communities in the country," said Stephen Thomas, the director of the Center for Health Equity at the University of Maryland. "To this day, vaccine uptake in the United States is embarrassing."

The Biden administration said some 70,000 sites were prepared to vaccinate people this fall. While 60 percent of those are pharmacies, they also include doctor's offices, community health centers and rural health clinics.

States can also seek money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for certain vaccination-related expenses, like setting up sites, buying equipment and offering translation or transportation services.

Having shifted much of the rollout to private sites, though, states have been promised FEMA reimbursements on a relatively modest \$550 million in vaccination spending so far this year. Last year, that figure was \$8.5 billion.

And while providers are supposed to [vaccinate everyone for free](#), with or without insurance, the federal government ran out of money this spring to offer reimbursements for shots for uninsured people, making it more difficult for them to receive boosters.

Sonya Bernstein, a senior policy adviser for the White House Covid response team, said federal spending to support vaccination efforts was being held back by a stalemate in Congress over the administration's request for billions of dollars in additional pandemic aid. Republicans have said that additional coronavirus spending could be covered with funding already approved by Congress, an assertion that some state health officials say is false.

"We are working with less because Congress has not provided us with that funding," Ms. Bernstein said. "But that has not gotten in the way of our preparations. We're working day in and day out to make sure states and our partners have the resources and support they need."

The United States is leaning ever more heavily on vaccines to defend against the virus at a time when health officials are [pulling back on other preventive measures](#), like masking, distancing and quarantining.

The fall vaccination campaign, which is expected to begin [soon after Labor Day](#), could be crucial. Many Americans have gone months since their last Covid vaccine or infection, allowing immune defenses to wane. More indoor gatherings are on the horizon, and epidemiologists are predicting [roughly 100,000 to 165,000 additional Covid deaths](#) by the spring.

And, for the first time, the government has bought vaccines that were reformulated in response to the virus's evolution. Manufacturers may finally have gained on the pathogen: The Omicron subvariant that the updated shots were designed to protect against remains dominant in the United States.

But, at the same time, the vaccination campaign is lagging. While two-thirds of Americans have completed the primary vaccine series, only about one-third have received boosters. The country's per capita booster coverage trails that of some 70 other nations, [according to Our World in Data](#).

Partly as a result, scientists said, Americans this year have died from Covid at a rate 80 percent higher than Canadians and 30 percent higher than residents of the European Union.

“We have criticisms of the way the initial vaccine rollout happened, but there was really a very significant effort to get everyone vaccinated,” said Elizabeth Wrigley-Field, a University of Minnesota sociologist, who mentioned mandates, financial rewards and large events. “None of that really exists with boosters.”

With Covid deaths having plateaued around 480 a day, policymakers are grappling with whether renewed investments are needed. Some states believe they are not.

In Alabama, where one-fifth of residents are boosted, Dr. Burnestine Taylor, the state’s medical officer for disease control and prevention, said officials had pared back health department clinics and become more reliant on pharmacies as demand dropped. The decision to receive additional shots, she said, now fell to individuals.

“At this point, we’re not doing a hard push,” Dr. Taylor said. “It’s a personal decision.”

Even some more proactive efforts have run into a wall of complacency. In Camden County, N.J., health workers have visited community events and knocked on doors, but they have not encountered as many takers as they had hoped, said Paschal Nwako, the health officer there.

But other health workers said that they were still winning converts, if fewer than last year, including those who had been confused about boosters or unable to find clinics with evening availability.

In Madison, Wis., Aaron Perry, a former police officer, said that \$100 stipends provided by the state have helped draw a dozen or so booster recipients to his health clinic every Friday, many from Black barbershops where he also runs health screening centers.

In San Bernardino, Calif., Jacinda Abdul-Mutakabbir, a pharmacist at Loma Linda University, said clinics late this spring could still attract as many as 30 first dose recipients.

And in Bismarck, N.D., Renae Moch, the public health director, said organizations like food pantries and homeless shelters still wanted to host regular clinics. But with surge staffing over, workers exhausted and positions harder to fill, she said she could only hold monthly pop-up clinics at a limited number of sites — and none in September, when back-to-school immunizations would consume the staff.

Of the hundreds of barbershops nationally that once hosted vaccination events, nine out of 10 are struggling to keep offering shots, said Dr. Thomas, of the University of Maryland, who has helped organize them. In some cases, he said, hospitals or pharmacies that eagerly used to send doses or staff have reported not having the money to partner with barbershops again or being concerned that small turnouts will not make it worth their while.

“The health care providers lost interest in us,” said Mike Brown, a barber outside Washington, D.C. “But I don’t think now is the time to give up the fight. People are still dying.”

For poorer Americans, the decrease in public vaccination sites could reduce the number who receive shots this fall, experts said.

In New York, Emily Gerteis, who arranges shots for people living on the street or in shelters at the Center for Urban Community Services, recalled convincing a patient this summer to be vaccinated. But when she suggested a pharmacy, the patient refused, preferring to hold out for city clinics and their \$100 incentives, Ms. Gerteis said.

The problem was that those offerings no longer existed. The patient was not vaccinated.



“A year ago, there was all this money for advertising, and they were throwing money at vaccines,” said Dr. Zeke McKinney, a physician in Minneapolis who had helped to organize vaccinations at his local barbershop until funding dried up. “Now, it’s like nobody cares.”

The White House is still seeking more funding from Congress, which it says is also needed to produce tests and develop next-generation Covid vaccines.

For now, some health officials said they were prepared to rev back up shuttered sites in the event demand surged, even if their workers were increasingly depleted. On some days recently, Dr. Mysheika Roberts, the health commissioner in Columbus, Ohio, said she needed to divert two-thirds of her Covid vaccination specialists to monkeypox clinics.

“It’s a bit overwhelming for some of our staff members,” she said.

Experts said that restoring health workforces and maintaining vaccine outreach could help break a boom-and-bust cycle in public health spending that has especially hurt marginalized Americans. Early investments, for example, helped narrow racial gaps in primary series vaccination rates. But in the booster rollout, considerable racial disparities have re-emerged.

The relaxation of federal Covid guidance and the reluctance to incentivize booster shots has not made it any easier to persuade people of the benefits of additional doses, some health officials said.

“There’s a lot of messaging from federal sources that things are good and we’re back to normal,” said Dr. Clay Marsh, West Virginia’s Covid czar. “It’s mixed messaging.”

Health experts encouraged making Covid shots a routine part of people’s medical care, including by enlisting more primary care doctors in the rollout. More creative marketing could also help generate demand, said Dr. Kevin Schulman, a Stanford University professor.

One example, he said, would be a campaign framed around protecting older relatives at fall or winter holiday gatherings. Despite the scientific uncertainties, he also said the time had to come to promise Americans that they would not be asked back for further Covid vaccines for at least a year — and that, when they were, it would be for an “annual Covid vaccine,” rather than a “booster.”

“Marketers spend huge amounts of time trying to figure these things out,” Dr. Schulman said. “Unfortunately, we just haven’t seen effort devoted in that direction.”

Ms. Bernstein, the White House adviser, said the administration was regularly surveying people about booster shots and using the results to inform messages it suggested to on-the-ground partners.

Ben Weston, Milwaukee County’s chief health policy adviser, said the nation’s underfunded booster campaign had hurt the same vulnerable and often nonwhite residents who have long struggled to gain access to good medical care.

“It’s putting up barriers,” he said, “particularly for populations that are more susceptible to those barriers.”

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HEADLINE	08/28 Parts of central Mississippi brace for floods
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/us/mississippi-flooding-rain.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/us/mississippi-flooding-rain.html</a>
GIST	<p>The authorities urged some residents of central Mississippi, including Jackson, to evacuate in advance of flooding that could peak on Monday and affect as many as 150 homes.</p> <p>The Pearl River, which has been swollen by heavy rains that started on Aug. 22, is expected to crest at 35.5 feet on Monday morning, said Marty Pope, senior service hydrologist for the National Weather Service in Jackson.</p>

That figure is six inches lower than initially forecast, which means some structures that otherwise might have flooded could be spared, he said. Subdivisions in northeast Jackson had water in the streets as of Sunday morning but the flooding had not yet reached any houses.

“As of now, we’ve just seen most of the water in the streets,” Mr. Pope said. “If we keep that by not going higher, hopefully it will keep it out of any big structures.”

In Jackson, between 100 and 150 homes could be affected, said Melissa Payne, a spokeswoman for the mayor’s office.

Gov. Tate Reeves of Mississippi issued a state of emergency on Saturday in anticipation of the flooding. “I encourage individuals in the flood zones to be cautious, take appropriate precautions and evacuate if necessary,” Mr. Reeves said in a statement.

The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency deployed 126,000 sandbags. It also advised residents to take photos of valuables, save copies of important documents, elevate and anchor utilities and wires, and clear debris.

Shelters were open at the Jackson Police Training Academy in Jackson and the Madison United Methodist Church in Madison.

“Search and rescue teams are on standby and are prepared to respond at the request of local emergency managers,” the emergency management agency said.

Flows over a dam at the Ross R. Barnett Reservoir, a 33,000-acre lake northeast of Jackson, were increased to reduce the chances that the reservoir would fail. The flows were then decreased on Saturday and expected to be held at those rates until Monday, according to the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District.

In the last few days, neighborhoods that were under flood warnings saw an influx of moving trucks and vans working to relocate residents’ valuables, said Joey Perkins, the emergency management director for Hinds County. The flooding is expected to recede in seven to 10 days, he said.

The warnings are reminiscent of flooding in the state in 2020 that affected about 150 homes, Mr. Perkins said. He said officials did not expect damage to surpass the 2020 levels.

Because this storm is during the summer, evaporation and the uptake of water by vegetation will likely help mitigate some of the flooding, Mr. Pope said. The 2020 storm happened during the winter.

More than 20 people have already contacted Shay Walker, a licensed mold inspector from New Orleans, about remediation work after the floodwaters recede.

She has worked in the aftermath of hurricanes in the South, removing black mold, which is dangerous to human health, and helping people navigate their insurance.

She said much of the damage she has seen has occurred when multiple natural disasters struck in a row, when necessary repairs were not addressed after one disaster and then became exacerbated by another.

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HEADLINE	08/29 China tech self-reliance quest hits reality
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/technology/china-semiconductors-technology.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/technology/china-semiconductors-technology.html</a>
GIST	Wearing a laboratory coat, China’s top leader, Xi Jinping, inspected a subsidiary of Yangtze Memory Technologies Company, a national semiconductor company based in Wuhan. It was April 2018, shortly

after the U.S. government had [barred](#) the Chinese telecommunications firm ZTE from doing business with American suppliers.

The ban was a [Sputnik moment](#) for China's tech industry and its leaders. Despite the country's success in building smartphones, e-commerce platforms and high-speed railways, they realized that tech boom had been built largely on top of Western technologies, especially chips that power nearly everything. They had to change that — and fast.

Mr. Xi [told](#) the executives of Yangtze Memory, or YMTC, that semiconductors were as important for manufacturing as hearts for humans. “When your heart isn't strong, no matter how big you are, you're not really strong,” state media reported him saying. He urged them to hurry and make tech breakthroughs to contribute to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Mr. Xi has repeated that message ever since, with growing urgency as the United States tries to restrict China's access to key semiconductor technologies. But a series of corruption investigations last month into the who's who of the country's semiconductor industry suggest that Mr. Xi may not be getting what he expected, or at least not quickly enough.

Those under investigation include the former chairman of YMTC who showed Mr. Xi around on the 2018 visit, and the head of a giant state fund, known as the Big Fund, which has invested in dozens of China's biggest chip projects.

The firms they led are at the heart of the country's push into semiconductors, the little slices of silicon that act as the brains of computers and other devices. Their downfalls are a public acknowledgment that China is rethinking its gold rush approach of throwing cash at projects in the hope that some work out. And it's a clear setback for the country's drive to become technologically self-sufficient.

Behind the purge lies a tension between Mr. Xi's vision of government-led tech self-reliance and the very nature of semiconductors.

The chip industry is highly complex and interconnected. It depends on an integrated global supply chain and draws upon expertise from different regions: design in the United States; manufacturing in Taiwan and South Korea; assembly, packaging and testing in China; and [equipment from the Netherlands](#). The comparative advantages of each region were built with decades of capital expenditure and research and development.

“Any government considering a push for self-reliance in semiconductors needs to face the harsh reality,” said Christopher A. Thomas, a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and Intel's former general manager in China, in an interview. “Semiconductors represent the highest form of human engineering achievement. They are the most difficult thing we create as a species. How can one country ‘win it all’ by itself?”

Charles Kau, a Taiwanese semiconductor veteran who has worked on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, said in a recent newspaper [interview](#) that he had tried telling mainland tech executives many times that it could take China 30 — or even 50 — years to become an industry leader.

Such statements aren't likely to be what Mr. Xi wants to hear. Expected to secure a third term at an important Communist Party congress this year, he is increasingly obsessed with tech “choke points” that have left China vulnerable amid the trade war with the United States, including bans on companies like ZTE, the potential war over the Taiwan Strait and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This month, President Biden signed into law a [\\$280 billion bill](#) aimed at strengthening domestic semiconductor manufacturing, design and research to compete with China.

To confront these challenges, Mr. Xi has increasingly reached back to Mao Zedong's playbook when China was operating a planned economy and had few friends and self-reliance was a necessity. He doesn't

hide his fondness for the Mao era's top-down approach to tackling big obstacles: mobilizing national resources, which he claims is a big advantage of China's state-dominating political system.

Such inward and backward vision has come to define Mr. Xi's views on how China should advance to become self-sufficient in tech and how fast. He has [promoted](#) technocrats from the space and defense industries who pulled off technologically challenging projects that he believes testify to the strength of China's system.

The purged semiconductor executives didn't live up to that criterion.

Zhao Weiguo, the YMTC chairman who stood behind Mr. Xi in a widely circulated photo of his 2018 visit, used to be the most high-profile person in the industry. He earned the nickname "semiconductor madman" after making a series of eye-popping investments in big chip projects through the company he controlled, Tsinghua Unigroup. He is best known in the West for his failed 2015 [takeover](#) of Micron Technology, a U.S. maker of memory chips.

The other man under investigation, who is equally influential, is Ding Wenwu, head of the Big Fund, which became Beijing's vehicle for doling out capital to chip makers.

At least five other executives who worked with the two men are also under investigation on corruption allegations. So is Xiao Yaqing, minister of industry and information technology, who oversaw the sector, though it's unclear whether the three sets of investigations are related.

The results of the Big Fund and Tsinghua Unigroup, which the Chinese government used to steer the development of the domestic chips industry, have been a mixed bag.

China's chip makers made more progress in the past five years than the previous decade, people in the industry said. In 2020, the country's chip sales grew 30.6 percent to reach \$39.8 billion, according to an [analysis](#) by the Semiconductor Industry Association, a trade organization and lobbying group in Washington.

But much of the headway was in the lower end of the very long product chain in semiconductors, and gaps in more advanced market segments remain large and could take years or even decades to close. China still spends more on chips than on any other imported good.

And there have been failures despite — or because of — tons of government money and subsidies. In the first 10 months of 2020, more than 58,000 firms registered as chip-related enterprises, according to an analysis by [China Economic Weekly](#), a magazine affiliated with the Communist Party's official newspaper, People's Daily. Some of the companies used to be in fashion, construction and other sectors, and changed their registration information only to gain access to easy money and cheap land, the magazine said. At least six semiconductor projects that boasted \$1 billion investments went bust.

Then there's Mr. Zhao's Tsinghua Unigroup, which started [unraveling](#) under a mountain of debt in late 2020. It was taken over this year by a Beijing-based firm, which was formed by a consortium led by investment companies, in a nearly \$9 billion deal.

Amid the chaos, the Big Fund, which has raised nearly \$50 billion since its inception in 2014, seemed to be performing well financially. Mr. Ding, the head of the fund, said in a 2017 [interview](#) that it needed to both serve the nation's strategic goals and make a profit. But critics [accused](#) it of investing in safe bets instead of risky projects that could lose money for a while but eventually make a technological difference.

It's not hard to imagine that Beijing looked at these results and found the performance underwhelming. There appeared to be too much greed and not enough patriotic dedication — the opposite of what Mr. Xi likes to see.

Mr. Xi has repeatedly said he would like to see more achievements like the “two bombs and one satellite” of the 1960s and 1970s, when China developed its own nuclear and hydrogen bombs and first satellite despite poor economic conditions and a hostile international environment.

Since 2019, the phrase “new whole nation system” has also started appearing in Mr. Xi’s speeches and party documents in the context of conquering key tech challenges. The system is a relic from China’s planned-economy period between the 1950s and 1970s, during which the government mobilized and allocated resources through administrative command. The new whole nation system will combine the benefits of government command and market forces, many party theorists have argued.

China’s many recent successes in the space and defense projects are likely examples of what Mr. Xi believes the country can accomplish with the new whole nation system and the “two bombs and one satellite” spirit. In 2021, China landed a rover on Mars and sent astronauts to a new space station.

In a move that some believe hints at Mr. Xi’s thinking on semiconductors, in July he appointed the official who led the development of the first Chinese-built passenger jetliner to replace the minister of industry and information technology, who is under investigation.

Some critics have cautioned against a top-down approach in semiconductors because of the global complexity.

Liu Yadong, the former editor in chief of the official Science and Technology Daily, said in an interview in May that the whole nation system helped China win Olympic golden medals and build atomic bombs, “but it’s not fit for building semiconductor chips.”

Mr. Xi keeps pressing ahead. In June, he visited another semiconductor company in Wuhan. He stressed that tech self-reliance was the foundation of China’s prosperity and the key to national security.

“We must take the technology lifeline in our own hands,” he said. “If every city, every high-tech development district, every tech company and every researcher can follow the government’s guidance in tech innovation, we will definitely be able to achieve the goal.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 India: China militarization Taiwan Strait</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/29/india-accuses-china-of-militarisation-of-the-taiwan-strait-as-row-over-navy-vessel-grows">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/29/india-accuses-china-of-militarisation-of-the-taiwan-strait-as-row-over-navy-vessel-grows</a>
GIST	<p>India has accused <a href="#">China</a> of “militarisation of the Taiwan Strait”, in an escalating war of words triggered by a Chinese military ship docking in a controversial Sri Lankan port.</p> <p>The accusation, referenced in a statement by the Indian high commission in Sri Lanka on Sunday, is <a href="#">reportedly</a> the first time the Indian government has used the descriptor, and is a rare intervention on the cross-straits issues as India contends with tensions on its own border with China.</p> <p>Earlier this month a Chinese military research vessel <a href="#">docked at Sri Lanka’s Hambantota port for a week</a>. Analysts say the Yuan Wang 5 is among a group of Chinese ships operated by the People’s Liberation Army that monitor satellite, rocket and intercontinental ballistic missile launches.</p> <p>The docking of the Yuan Wang 5 was delayed for several days after <a href="#">India</a> objected, amid fears that Beijing intends to use the port as a military base. China’s foreign affairs ministry had said the vessel was conducting maritime research, in line with international law and practice, and would not affect “the security and economic interests of any country”.</p> <p>The Yuan Wang 5 left a week ago, but over the weekend China’s embassy in Sri Lanka accused India of using security concerns to conduct “de facto thorough interference in Sri Lanka’s sovereignty and independence”.</p>

On Saturday, India's high commission in Colombo said Sri Lanka "needs support, not unwanted pressure or unnecessary controversies to serve another country's agenda". It also referred to "debt-driven agendas", in apparent reference to the [Chinese-funded Hambantota port](#), which is [often tied to accusations of Chinese debt-trap diplomacy](#).

Sri Lanka is currently navigating its way out of its worst-ever economic crisis, and is balancing the competing influences of India and China, both of which analysts say it needs. Chinese loans account for about 10% of the nation's total foreign debt. But since this year, India has also lent about \$3.8bn to help Sri Lanka through its economic crisis.

Wen-ti Sung, a political scientist at the Australian National University specialising on Taiwan and China, said Delhi was creating "new bargaining leverages" in accusing China of "militarisation" of the strait, by normalising "tougher rhetoric" which it could offer to discontinue in future negotiations.

"Knowing that China does not want escalation on multiple fronts, India is venturing to create a new leverage where none existed before, by calling China out on Taiwan," Sung said, noting China's domestic pressures with the coming 20th party congress, when President Xi Jinping will seek a third term.

The ship docked at Hambantota just a week after China completed its large-scale military drills around Taiwan, in response to a visit by the US House speaker, Nancy Pelosi. Since those drills ended, China's military has continued with increased activity which [analysts have labelled a concerning "new normal"](#). There are now near daily crossings of the media line, an unofficial border dividing the Taiwan Strait, but which China has recently claimed as its sovereign waters.

At the time, when the US and other allies were condemning the drills, India's government stuck to vaguer statements, saying it was "concerned at recent developments".

"We urge the exercise of restraint, avoidance of unilateral actions to change status quo, de-escalation of tensions and efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region," an external affairs spokesman said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 Day 187 of the Russia invasion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/29/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-187-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/29/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-187-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Volodymyr Zelenskiy, Ukraine's president, held a secret meeting with representatives of Ukraine's defence and security sectors on Sunday.</b> "All the issues we considered are important, but secret, I cannot go into detail," he said. The meeting was attended by the heads of the armed forces, intelligence agencies, the ministry of defence, the ministry of internal affairs, the Ukrainian security service as well as other defence forces.</li> <li>• <b>Russian artillery fired at Ukrainian towns across the river from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant,</b> local officials said on Sunday. The regional governor, Oleksandr Starukh, said Russian forces struck residential buildings in the main city of Zaporizhzhia and the town of Orikhiv farther east. Ukraine's military reported shelling of nine more towns in the area on the opposite side of the Dnieper river from the plant.</li> <li>• <b>The UN nuclear watchdog is waiting for clearance for its officials to visit the plant</b> "to help stabilise the nuclear safety and security situation there". The Energoatom head, Petro Kotin, told the Guardian a visit from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could come before the end of the month, but the Ukrainian energy minister, Lana Zerkal, told a local radio station she was not convinced Russia was negotiating in good faith.</li> <li>• <b>The US has said Russia does not want to acknowledge the grave radiological risk at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant,</b> adding that was the reason it blocked a nuclear non-proliferation treaty deal's final draft. "The Russian Federation alone decided to block consensus on a final document at the conclusion of the Tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Russia did so in order to block language that merely</li> </ul>



	<p>acknowledged the grave radiological risk at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine,” said a US state department statement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Concern about the <a href="#">potential risk of radiation leaks</a> at the plant persists.</b> Ukrainian and Russian authorities issued fresh warnings about the risk of radioactive leaks, after shelling that the sides blamed on each other. Ukraine’s state energy operator warned there are “risks of hydrogen leakage and sputtering of radioactive substances”. Russia has ignored widespread international calls for the area to be demilitarised.</li> <li>• <b>Ukrainians are likely to experience their <a href="#">coldest winter in decades</a>,</b> its gas chief has said, as the thermostats on its Soviet-era centralised heating systems are set to be switched on later and turned down. Yuri Vitrenko, the head of the state gas company Naftogaz, said indoor temperatures would be set at between 17-18C, about four degrees lower than normal, and he advised people to stock up on blankets and warm clothes for when outdoor temperatures fall to and beyond the -10C winter average.</li> <li>• <b>Germany is replenishing its gas stocks more quickly than expected despite drastic Russian supply cuts</b> and should meet an October target early, the government has said. Europe’s largest economy is heavily dependent on Russian gas and has raced to bolster its reserves before winter, crediting energy-saving measures in recent weeks and massive purchases of gas from other suppliers.</li> <li>• <b>EU foreign ministers are expected to <a href="#">suspend Russian tourist visa facilitation</a> next week.</b> The EU move falls short of an outright ban but would make getting travel documents significantly more complicated and expensive. The EU foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, said a ban would lack the necessary support. “I don’t think that to cut the relationship with the Russian civilian population will help and I don’t think that this idea will have the required unanimity,” he told Austria’s ORF TV on Sunday.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Electric grid vulnerable: Russia, terrorists</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/america-electric-grid-60-minutes-2022-08-28/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/america-electric-grid-60-minutes-2022-08-28/</a>
GIST	<p>If there's one thing we can't live without in our modern world, it's electricity. It provides heat and light, pumps water and fuel, refrigerates food, and breathes life into our TVs, computers and phones. So it is no surprise the North American electric grid, which creates, moves and delivers our electricity, is considered the most critical part of our critical infrastructure. What is surprising is the nature of the grid itself: a hodge-podge of public and privately-owned, half-century-old tech, that is increasingly vulnerable to severe weather, cyber-attacks, and even physical assaults. As we first reported earlier this year, no government agency, not even the Department of Energy, is truly in charge of protecting it. One attack, nine years ago, was a wake-up call for industry and government alike.</p> <p>On the night of April 16, 2013, a mysterious incident south of San Jose marked the most serious attack on our power grid in history.</p> <p>For 20 minutes, gunmen methodically fired at high voltage transformers at the Metcalf Power substation. Security cameras captured bullets hitting the chain link fence.</p> <p>Jon Wellinghoff: They knew what they were doing. They had a specific objective. They wanted to knock out the substation.</p> <p>At the time, Jon Wellinghoff was chairman of FERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, a small government agency with jurisdiction over the U.S. high voltage transmission system.</p> <p>Bill Whitaker: You were concerned enough that you flew out there?</p> <p>Jon Wellinghoff: That's correct. And I took two other individuals who train special forces, U.S. special forces. They train people to actually attack infrastructure.</p>

And what the former commandos found looked familiar. They discovered the attackers had reconnoitered the site and marked firing positions with piles of rocks. That night they broke into two underground vaults and cut off communications coming from the substation.

Jon Wellinghoff: Then they went from these vaults, across this road, over into a pasture area here. There were at least four or five different firing positions.

Bill Whitaker: No real security?

Jon Wellinghoff: There was no security at all, really.

They aimed at the narrow cooling fins, causing 17 of 21 large transformers to overheat and stop working.

Jon Wellinghoff: They hit them 90 times, so they were very accurate. And they were doing this at night, with muzzle flash in their face.

Someone outside the plant heard gunfire and called 911. The gunmen disappeared without a trace about a minute before a patrol car arrived. The substation was down for weeks, but fortunately PG&E had enough time to reroute power and avoid disaster.

Bill Whitaker: If they had succeeded, what would've happened?

Jon Wellinghoff: Could've brought down all of Silicon Valley.

Bill Whitaker: We're talking Google, Apple; all these guys--

Jon Wellinghoff: Yes, yes. That's correct.

Bill Whitaker: Who do you think this could have been?

Jon Wellinghoff: I don't know. We don't know if they were a nation state. We don't know if they were domestic actors. But it was somebody who did have competent people who could in fact plan out this kind of a very sophisticated attack.

The grid is a sprawling target. There are actually three in the U.S.: the eastern, western and Texas has its own. Most of us rarely notice substations. There are 55,000 across the country, each housing transformers, the workhorses of the grid. Inside these massive metal boxes, raw electricity is converted to higher or lower voltages.

Should a transformer explode, like this one in Manhattan during Superstorm Sandy, the system is designed to trigger a localized, grid-preserving blackout. But if several sections of the grid go down at the same time, the shutdowns can cascade like dominoes. That's what set off the great Northeast Blackout in 2003, leaving 45 million Americans without power. A few months before the assault on Metcalf, Jon Wellinghoff of FERC commissioned a study to see if a physical attack on critical transformers could trigger cascading blackouts.

Jon Wellinghoff: It was actually a very shocking result to us that there's very few number of substations you need to take out, in the entire United States, to knock out the entire grid.

Bill Whitaker: Knock out the entire grid?

Jon Wellinghoff: That's correct.

Bill Whitaker: How many would it take to knock out putting the entire country in a blackout?

Jon Wellinghoff: Less than 20.

The report was leaked to the Wall Street Journal. It found the U.S. could suffer a coast-to-coast blackout if saboteurs knocked out just nine substations.

Bill Whitaker: You are relaying this in a very measured way. I would think this would be quite alarming.

Jon Wellinghoff: It was alarming. There's no question. It is alarming.

After the Metcalf attack, FERC pressed the utilities to harden defenses at their most critical substations – erect walls and sensors to prevent similar attacks – there's now a wall around Metcalf. But many substations remain vulnerable targets, like one we found in southern California that serves more than 300,000 customers - huge transformers protected by a chain link fence.

Dr. Granger Morgan: Anybody who knows about power systems knows that the, the grid is physically spread all over the countryside. There are a lot of places that are vulnerable.

Dr. Granger Morgan is a Carnegie Mellon University professor of engineering who chaired three National Academy of Sciences reports on the power grid for the U.S. government – the most recent in 2021. An earlier report on terrorism was classified for five years.

Dr. Granger Morgan: We simply made a strong case that the grid was physically very vulnerable.

Bill Whitaker: Why was there a specific report on terrorism and the grid?

Dr. Granger Morgan: There were concerns about the possibility that a terrorist organization could attack the grid. And around the world there have been a fair number of attacks on grids.

They have attacked with bombs, planes and drones. Russia's cyber attack on Ukraine's grid in 2015 knocked about 60 substations offline, leaving 230,000 people in the dark. The U.S. secretary of energy has said Russia could do the same thing here.

Dr. Granger Morgan: In the report we did on the resilience of the power system we did argue that we needed an organization, probably DOE and Department of Homeland Security, to systematically look at all the kinds of vulnerabilities we have and then begin to figure out who could address each. In terms of resilience issues, there's nobody in charge. I mean, there's no single entity that has responsibility for everything.

Mike Mabee: The U.S. electric grid is the largest machine in the history of mankind. It is a marvel of modern engineering. No one person owns or controls it. It's actually 3,000 different companies, both public and private sector, that own or operate little pieces of the electric grid.

Mike Mabee is an Iraq war vet, a former cop and a self-taught grid security expert. By day he works for the government. In his spare time, he uncovers public information electric utilities would rather not see of the light of day and publishes them on a website called "Grid Security Now." He is both fascinated and horrified by the grid.

Mike Mabee: I think everybody needs to be as alarmed as I am. We've had disasters in the past but they've generally always been regional in scale. What we've never had is a national-scale blackout, which is completely possible under some known threats such as the cyber threat, the physical security threat, or even extreme weather. And the U.S. public is completely unprepared to survive without the electric grid for any period of time whatsoever.

So when he moved to Texas two years ago, he prepared for the worst, installing solar, wind and battery power.

Mike Mabee: The whole system's 48 volts.

Mabee's family survived last winter's deadly storm, hundreds of Texans perished.

Mike Mabee: And the deaths were largely due to hypothermia, carbon monoxide poisoning because when people got cold they would do things like go into their car in the garage to try to stay warm.

Mabee has become a thorn in the side of the federal government and utility companies.

Mike Mabee: I filed a complaint about supply chain cybersecurity. I filed a complaint about physical security. I filed a complaint about the Texas blackout.

Bill Whitaker: The government and the industry. They think you're an annoyance?

Mike Mabee: I've been termed a "grid security gadfly," which I wear that as a badge of honor.

One frequent target: the Department of Energy. Mabee told us the grid information the DOE puts out is confusing and dispersed. He said he spends hours trying to make sense of it all.

Mike Mabee: There is a requirement that they report electric disturbance events. But the data from the Department of Energy is so bad. So, you know, I took it upon myself to do some data crunching. And what I found is that 38% of the electric disturbance events in the United States are due to physical attacks against the electric.

Bill Whitaker: 38%? That's a lot.

Mike Mabee: So in the past decade, there have been over 700 physical attacks against the U.S. electric grid.

Many are copy cats of the Metcalf assault. In 2016, an eco terrorist in Utah shot up a large transformer, triggering a blackout. He said he'd planned to hit five substations in one day to shut down the West Coast. In 2020, the FBI uncovered a white supremacist plot called "lights out" to simultaneously attack substations around the country.

Dr. Liz Sherwood-Randall: We're seeing planning to disable the delivery of power to the American people.

Dr. Liz Sherwood-Randall is President Biden's homeland security advisor. We met with her and Anne Neuberger, deputy national security advisor for cyber. They told us the administration's infrastructure plans should help secure the grid, but acknowledge the threats are real.

Dr. Liz Sherwood-Randall: We have physical threats to the grid. We have natural threats to the grid. We have cyber threats to the grid.

Neuberger came to the White House from the secretive National Security Agency, where she battled Russian hackers in cyberspace.

Bill Whitaker: You said that you've been talking to private utility companies around the country about the potential for a cyber attack. What are you telling them?

Anne Neuberger: We're sharing with them some of the context regarding how Russia and other countries use cyber in crisis or conflict. We've actively downgraded intelligence. We've taken any information we have about malicious software or tactics that the Russian government has used, shared that with the private sector with very practical advice of how to protect against it.

Bill Whitaker: Isn't the problem that when it comes to the grid, there's nothing like the FAA or the Food and Drug Administration or the Securities and Exchange Commission? There's no one overall agency overseeing these, you said, 3,000 different utilities across the country?

	<p>Dr. Liz Sherwood-Randall: We don't have one system. We have several grids. We also have individual energy ecosystems in regions and states. And that's part of our strength because the resources for energy are different in different regions. And we have to acknowledge that we're not going to have a one-size-fits-all system.</p> <p>Bill Whitaker: You call it one of our strengths. But it also seems to be one of our vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Dr. Liz Sherwood-Randall: Well, in my view, we can't impose the regulations that would-- you would be suggesting as a federal government. We can set standards and we are setting standards in a variety of arenas.</p> <p>Carnegie Mellon's Granger Morgan says what government, industry and law enforcement are doing doesn't meet the magnitude of the threat.</p> <p>Dr. Granger Morgan: What we need at this point is to get the White House to put all the key players together in a room to identify the biggest vulnerabilities and then take steps to reduce them.</p> <p>Bill Whitaker: I'm surprised that's not being done.</p> <p>Dr. Granger Morgan: It has not been done. And it needs to happen now.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Covid funding runs out, virus relapse?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thedailybeast.com/americas-covid-funding-setbacks-could-a-trigger-virus-relapse-across-the-world?ref=home">https://www.thedailybeast.com/americas-covid-funding-setbacks-could-a-trigger-virus-relapse-across-the-world?ref=home</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Federal COVID funding</a> is beginning to run out in the U.S. As the once extensive government investment in vaccines, therapies and testing vanishes, epidemiologists are bracing for a major shakeup in—some would say collapse of—critical efforts to contain the <a href="#">SARS-CoV-2 virus</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">Vaccine initiatives</a> could suffer the biggest blow. With the impending end of government funding, Americans would have to start paying for their own COVID shots—a disincentive that could further suppress the country's middling vaccination uptake, <a href="#">currently plateaued</a> at 67 percent “fully” vaccinated, usually with two doses of a messenger-RNA vaccine.</p> <p>Another likely victim is COVAX, the international vaccine consortium that buys jabs for poorer countries. COVAX has been struggling even before the coming squeeze on U.S. funding. Now an existing shortfall in doses is set to get a lot worse.</p> <p>Finally, an erosion of federal funding could delay or even kill off efforts to develop new, universal coronavirus vaccines that could work against current and future variants. Experts have pinned their hopes on universal jabs to help the population get ahead of a constantly evolving virus. Without that new vaccine, we'll always be playing catch-up.</p> <p>Politics are to blame for the coming cash crunch. “Congress is acting as if the COVID-19 pandemic is over, which is far from true,” Lawrence Gostin, a Georgetown University global health expert, told The Daily Beast.</p> <p>Not every expert agrees there's too little federal money in the pipeline. “In the short term, I think the resources the U.S. has put into public health responses to COVID-19 will hold up,” Eric Bortz, a University of Alaska-Anchorage epidemiologist, told The Daily Beast.</p> <p>But it's undeniable that the pipeline is narrowing—a lot.</p>

In the first year of the pandemic, there was broad political consensus in Washington, D.C., that the federal government should foot most of the bill for the country's response to the pandemic.

In 2020, a Republican Senate and a Democratic House of Representatives agreed to—and President Donald Trump, a Republican, signed off on—more than \$2.5 trillion of spending to develop and produce vaccines and therapies, ramp up testing, prop up businesses, and keep individuals solvent as the economy temporarily shut down.

In early 2021, incoming President Joe Biden and narrow Democratic majorities in the Senate and House used a budgetary gimmick called “reconciliation” to quickly pass into law another \$2 trillion in COVID-related spending. But Republican support was waning—and it's not hard to see why. “Public health” and “vaccine” were becoming dirty words in the conspiratorial, anti-government Republican base.

After that initial reconciliation bill, the hardening of the Republican Party made it all but impossible for Biden to pass a big spending bill without relying on the once-a-year reconciliation. Most bills require 60 votes in the Senate, after all, and the Democrats have just 50 senators plus Vice President Kamala Harris as a tiebreaker.

When Biden finally did get his second reconciliation bill through Congress in August—the \$750-billion Inflation Reduction Act—it mostly paid for health-insurance subsidies and efforts to address climate change. Biden and his allies in Congress spent the spring wheedling with Republicans for a modest \$10-billion boost for vaccines, therapies, and testing.

“COVID-19 isn't waiting on Congress to negotiate,” the White House [stated in April](#). “Other countries will not wait. Time is of the essence. Congress must act urgently to help save more American lives and ensure we remain prepared.”

But the Republicans said no, and the bill died. The Biden administration hasn't yet tried to revive the funding initiative—and, indeed, seems to have given up on ever doing so.

Ashish Jha, the White House's COVID response coordinator, signaled Biden's surrender on federal COVID funding in an online event sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation on Aug. 16. “One of the things we've spent a lot of time thinking about in the last many months... is getting us out of that acute emergency phase where the U.S. government is buying the vaccines, buying the treatments, buying the diagnostic tests,” Jha [said](#).

Where before, anyone in the U.S. could get a COVID vaccine or booster and even test kits free of cost, thanks to government subsidies, soon they'll have to pay for everything. “My hope is that in 2023, you're going to see the commercialization of almost all of these products,” Jha explained.

The funding collapse will be most visible when people go to get vaccinated, boosted, or tested. In particular, Americans expect COVID jabs to be free. What happens when, all of a sudden, they cost \$50 or \$100?

Expect vaccine uptake to dip—and booster uptake to dip even more. “The Biden administration and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] are having difficulty explaining the urgency of boosters,” Peter Hotez, an expert in vaccine development at Baylor College, told The Daily Beast. “Now if funding declines with it, this will only add to the problem.”

The looming end of federal COVID funding will also affect important, long-term programs that aren't as visible to the general public.

For one, there's a good chance the U.S. contribution to COVAX—already inadequate, according to some experts—is going to slip even further. COVAX, a consortium of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and a pair of epidemiological foundations including Gavi, formed in April 2020. Its goal: to distribute 2 billion doses of COVID vaccine by the end of 2021.



[It fell short by nearly a billion doses.](#) Manufacturing issues were a factor, but so was funding. “We right now are basically out of money,” Seth Berkley, director of Gavi, [said in January](#). The Biden administration had pledged \$4 billion and also brokered private financing through a federally run investment agency.

The U.S. is COVAX’s biggest donor, but not its most generous. Both Germany and Japan have donated a greater share of their gross domestic product. And another big injection of American money looks unlikely as Republicans pull tight the purse strings.

That means fewer vaccines for poorer countries as the pandemic grinds toward its fourth year and vaccination rates in the poorest countries remain stubbornly low—14 percent in Nigeria, for example, compared to the global rate of 63 percent. Starving COVAX “will only enhance global inequities,” Gostin said.

A collapse in federal funding could also scramble ambitious efforts to develop universal vaccines that work against SARS-CoV-2 and every other major coronavirus, of which there are scores. A pan-COVID jab should offer robust protection against successive SARS-CoV-2 variants, potentially for years.

It’s an important project. “We are going to have to come up with long-term vaccine solutions that don’t necessitate chasing the latest variant,” James Lawler, an infectious disease expert at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, told The Daily Beast.

There are around a dozen major universal vaccines in development. The two leading efforts are at the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations in Norway and the U.S. government’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The latter obviously depends on federal funding. But so do several smaller efforts to invent a pan-COVID jab, including one at Duke University’s Human Vaccine Institute.

“Without government funding, research and development of new and improved vaccines and drugs could slow considerably,” Gostin said. Absent sustained federal investment, it might take years to deploy a universal vaccine. In the worst case, the developers at smaller labs might never finish their pan-COVID formulations.

COVID is expensive. In killing millions, disabling millions more, sidelining careers, wrecking businesses, and disrupting travel and trade, the pandemic has cost the world an incalculable sum of money.

A few trillion in U.S. government spending, spread out over years, arguably isn’t a lot of money, considering how much that spending has mitigated the worst outcomes as the novel-coronavirus rages around the world.

But even that modest investment in U.S. and global health is winding down as politics trumps epidemiology. It’s hard to argue that the collapse of federal COVID funding will undermine vaccine-uptake and complicate efforts to develop new vaccines. The only question is exactly how much Americans’ stingy new approach to public health will hurt them, and everyone else.

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HEADLINE	08/28 US translation flop fuels messy row
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thedailybeast.com/translation-issue-in-the-budapest-memorandum-is-fueling-a-messy-row-between-the-us-and-ukraine?ref=home">https://www.thedailybeast.com/translation-issue-in-the-budapest-memorandum-is-fueling-a-messy-row-between-the-us-and-ukraine?ref=home</a>
GIST	<p>Behind closed doors, a group of U.S. diplomats sat down to negotiate a crucial agreement about protecting Ukraine’s borders after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Little did they know their efforts to seem direct and sincere in negotiations would devolve into a clouded message of seeming contradictions at the center of <a href="#">a war in Ukraine</a>.</p> <p>The plan was to finalize a deal in December of 1994 about all of the nuclear weapons Ukraine inherited after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Ukraine relinquished them on the condition that <a href="#">Russia</a>, the United</p>

States, and the U.K. promise security “assurances” to protect the territorial integrity and borders of Ukraine through the so-called Budapest Memorandum.

Russia’s invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014, not to mention Russia’s war on Ukraine this year, have already breached the agreement. And Ukrainian officials have even bristled at what they see as broken promises from the Biden administration.

[Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky](#) threatened earlier this year if Ukraine didn’t receive the deal’s security guarantees, the whole agreement [would be void](#), and has been railing against the agreement since. “Sometimes it’s better to have nothing and know that you are alone with the enemy than to have a large circle of friends, partners who in fact will not protect you,” [Zelensky said in April](#).

Fedir Venislavsky, President Zelenskyy’s representative to Ukraine’s Constitutional Court, has chimed in, too.

“When Ukraine gave up its nuclear potential... Ukraine was confident the other countries who had signed all of those agreements were going to guarantee its territorial integrity,” [Venislavsky said](#). “They signed their obligation to protect Ukraine, to provide the security and safety,” he said, but “did not perform.”

Some of the aggrieved response can trace its origins all the way back to 1994 and comes down to the very text itself, which has left things murky at best—with loads of wiggle room for disagreement.

The agreement is not legally binding, and the text doesn’t lay out specific obligations describing what security “assurances” are. And that’s by design.

The American diplomats showed up to the negotiations insisting the United States could not commit to protecting Ukrainian territorial sovereignty with security “guarantees”—which would rope the United States into military commitments akin to NATO guarantees. The United States could instead offer vague “assurances” it would respond to threats or attacks. All sides agreed, and signed off in December of 1994.

But a translation hiccup has left various interpretations of the text that might be inserting some doubt and bewilderment about obligations to Ukraine now, negotiators for the agreement told The Daily Beast.

The Russian and Ukrainian negotiators only provided the word “garantii” or “harantii” as a way to describe “guarantees” or “assurances,” but there was no explicit way to specify in Russian and Ukrainian which word the United States meant in the deal, according to Rose Gottemoeller, the former Deputy Secretary General of NATO and former U.S. under secretary of state for arms control and international security. And making sure the agreement only contained vague “assurances”—and not specific military commitments or “guarantees”—was the U.S. government’s goal.

“‘Garantii’ in Russian and Ukrainian is kind of the only word they had—they didn’t have a word for ‘assurances,’” Gottemoeller, who served on the White House National Security Council as Director for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia Affairs at the time, told The Daily Beast. “The lawyers were there, the linguists were there, and we all agreed as we were preparing to sign this document that they were equal in meaning in three languages. So the English says ‘security assurances,’ and the Russian and Ukrainian versions say ‘garantii.’ They say ‘security guarantees.’”

The American negotiating team took several steps to try to ensure that there wasn’t going to be confusion one day, according to Steve Pifer, a former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine who was also involved in the negotiations.

“I sat down with the heads of the Russian and Ukrainian delegations and said, ‘we need to put this on the record that when you see garantii in Russian, or harantii in Ukrainian it is understood in the English sense of the word assurance,’” Pifer told The Daily Beast.

But that context is gone now, Gottemoeller said.

“There was not any confusion that the United States was offering something different,” Gottemoeller told The Daily Beast. “And that point is being lost.”

The nuance has been missing for some time in Ukraine, and some of the confusion about America’s promises might come from Ukrainians’ own political efforts to rally support around the deal they brought home by amping it up to seem more substantial than it actually was.

“When Ukrainians, after Budapest, went back, they probably tried to sell it more as ‘guaranteed’ assurances, in part because there was a political interest in Ukraine in saying this is a bigger deal and sort of obscuring the limitation that we gave,” Pifer said.

And now, six months into Russia’s invasion into Ukraine, during which Russians have lobbed nuclear threats left and right, the Ukrainians are smarting, looking back and wishing they had made the agreement more ironclad and clear. Ukrainian officials are starting a campaign to draw up a new agreement that will build on the Budapest Memorandum—but this time with details, the Head of the Office of Ukraine’s President, Andriy Yermak, said in an interview in July. The U.K. and Poland have expressed interest so far, and Ukraine is pressuring the United States to join in, according to Yermak.

And this time, Ukraine wants ratification from the legislative branches of allies and “guarantees”—a pill that might be hard to swallow for the Biden administration.

“We are not interested in Budapest Memorandum number two. I think it will be a structure involving a large agreement with many participants, and then there will be additional bilateral, more detailed agreements with our partners,” Yermak told HB.

“Given the Budapest Memorandum experience... the future agreement should contain security guarantees, not assurances,” Yermak noted at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

When reached for comment, the White House and the State Department didn’t comment directly on whether the United States is in talks about a new version of the Budapest Memorandum with guarantees.

Attempts to criticize the United States’ assistance have appeared to simmer for now—the Biden administration has sent a whole host of security packages with key weaponry that has helped Ukraine defend against Russia, and the Biden administration has issued sanctions in an attempt to grind Moscow’s economy down. A State Department spokesperson defended the Biden administration’s approach, noting the administration has “reaffirmed” the Budapest commitments “repeatedly.”

But those foundational elements of the Budapest Memorandum—and confusion about what the United States’ obligations and promises are—remain and could reach a make-or-break moment in the coming weeks in the context of nuclear threats. In the absence of a new agreement, the existing deal on “assurances” could have a key role to play as Russian officials have been working to issue public declarations about when they could use nuclear weapons.

In the Budapest Memorandum, the United States committed to “provide assistance” to Ukraine “if Ukraine should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used.”

U.S. officials have been warning for weeks that the war could take a dire turn as Russia works to run sham referenda in Ukrainian territories.

And although Russia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov has insisted Russia would only use nuclear weapons in self-defense, concerns are growing that the Russians might try to claim “self-defense” to protect Ukrainian territory that Russia is seizing in Ukraine and bring nuclear weapons into the mix.

“The complexity here is that the Russians might use a nuclear weapon on the Ukrainian territory claiming [the] territory is now sovereign Russian territory and essentially they are defending their own territory by terrifying Ukrainians, in fact, in a way that might lead the Ukrainians to capitulate,” Gottemoeller said.

As far as nuclear threats and attacks go, the Biden administration hasn’t changed its nuclear posture. And for now, the National Security Council is breathing a sigh of relief at what it perceives to be Russia’s hesitation to use nuclear weapons full force.

“Russia itself has said many times that a nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought,” National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson told The Daily Beast.

It’s not a certainty that Russia will use nuclear weapons. But if it does, it could form a tricky test of the Biden administration’s resolve to protect Ukraine, particularly when the agreement isn’t crystal clear about what the United States ought to do, and when the Biden administration has been mostly mum on the deal.

The signals from the Biden administration aren’t helping—the Biden administration has largely shied away from citing the Budapest Memorandum as a justification for sending aid to Ukraine, which could raise questions about its commitment to the memorandum broadly. And that fuzzy approach ought to change, says Pifer.

The United States isn’t helping Ukraine just because it cares about democracy. It promised, when Ukraine relinquished its nuclear weapons, that it would help serve as a protector of Ukraine as part of a plan to get those nuclear weapons out of the picture.

“In the Budapest Memorandum we told the Ukrainians we would care. And that was an important piece in getting Ukraine to give up 1900 strategic nuclear weapons, weapons that had been designed, built, and deployed to strike the United States,” Pifer said.

Ukraine could probably do a better job of getting the United States to talk up the spirit of the agreement and follow through, said Mariana Budjeryn, a Senior Research Associate with the Project on Managing the Atom (MTA) at the Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center.

“There isn’t an international adjudication body, there isn’t a court where you can contest this. It really is what you make of it,” Budjeryn told The Daily Beast.

Beyond just tensions about whether the United States is doing enough, doubts about how helpful the Budapest Memorandum has been could lead more nations to look favorably on nuclear proliferation, according to Budjeryn.

States that might be eyeing obtaining nuclear weapons one day might come away with the conclusion that not having nuclear weapons, even with security agreements with nuclear powers like the United States for protection, does little in actually deterring threats and attacks.

“They’re not going to sit around perusing letter by letter and theory by theory of what the Budapest Memorandum was and what it wasn’t. The public narrative in traditional public space is, there was Ukraine. It inherited nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union. It decided to give them up in return for these security assurances. And look what happened to it,” Budjeryn said. “When you have that kind of breach, I think it reverberates through the whole system.”

A senior administration official acknowledged that Russia might be increasing incentives for nuclear proliferation around the world. But the official told The Daily Beast the White House’s hope is that the global response to punish Russia for its invasion of a non-nuclear state sends potential proliferators a message that it doesn’t pay to attack others.

“We will continue to promote nonproliferation policy even as Russia’s actions in Ukraine may make the job harder,” the senior administration official told The Daily Beast. “The incredible costs being born by

	Russia as a result of its strategic mistake, both militarily as imposed by Ukrainian forces and economically due to the global response, should deter any nuclear armed state who chooses military aggression against a non-nuclear armed state.”
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Pediatric case of monkeypox in King Co.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/physician-caring-infant-hospitalized-monkeypox-washington-state-details/story?id=88934112">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/physician-caring-infant-hospitalized-monkeypox-washington-state-details/story?id=88934112</a>
GIST	<p>Although thousands of Americans have tested positive for monkeypox since the outbreak began, this past spring, only a handful of pediatric monkeypox cases have been identified across the U.S.</p> <p>Across the country, at least 18 children in 10 states have now tested positive for monkeypox, according to state and local health officials, and little is known about most of these cases, due to concerns over patient privacy.</p> <p>One of these cases has been identified in King County, Washington, where local officials recently confirmed that an infant in their community had tested positive for the monkeypox virus.</p> <p>The child has been hospitalized and receiving treatment for the virus in recent days after being exposed to monkeypox through an infected family member, officials said. The child did not become infected in a school, child care, or other public setting.</p> <p>Officials from Seattle Children's Hospital confirmed to ABC News that their teams are currently caring for the infected baby, who is under the age of 1.</p> <p>Dr. Danielle Zerr, medical director of infection prevention at Seattle Children's Hospital, told ABC News that although the infant is still hospitalized, the patient is doing better, and officials are currently creating a discharge plan. The patient has been in the hospital for several days, according to Zerr.</p> <p>A concerning rash prompted the parents to initially seek care for the infant, she said.</p> <p>"The main thing that the patient was experiencing was the rash and complications of the rash, so, concern of super infection of the rash. Those were really the reasons that the patient came into the hospital," Zerr said.</p> <p>"The rash can be quite pronounced in many patients, especially as it evolves over time. And I think that sort of a rash on a child is going to raise people's antennae, and lead a parent to seek care," she added.</p> <p>In addition to "supportive care" to ensure the patient is hydrated and well-cared for, the hospital has been treating the young patient with TPOXX, a Food and Drug Administration-approved treatment for smallpox, that has been made available for children under special expanded access protocols.</p> <p>"Once we had the confirmed test result, we started that antiviral for the patient and it did really seem like there was some improvement in the days following starting the antiviral," Zerr said. "The rash has shown some improvement with treatment. So that's a great sign, and [the] patient seems to maybe be feeling a little bit better."</p> <p>The hospital, and local public health authorities, have been working to roll out contact tracing to determine whether any staff, patients or families have been exposed to the virus. A hospital representative also told ABC News, in a statement, that "appropriate isolation" has been "instituted" for some staff. Anyone who may have been exposed will be contacted.</p> <p>Individuals who have been exposed to the positive case will also be offered the monkeypox vaccine, Zerr said.</p>

Earlier this month, in an effort to protect the youngest Americans, the FDA issued an emergency use authorization that allows children under 18 who are at high risk of monkeypox to be vaccinated.

In July, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned in a health alert that there is some preliminary evidence to suggest children younger than 8 years old could develop more severe illness, if infected with monkeypox.

Zerr noted that it is understandable that given the news of the emergence of pediatric monkeypox cases, parents may feel anxious. However, she stressed that at this time, it is still quite rare for children to contract the virus, and it is unlikely the children will become infected in settings like schools, as most transmission is occurring between close contact.

"I think the thing that we focus on is that they've so far been very few pediatric cases," Zerr said. "It does generally require closer contact, so it's not the kind of illness that is likely to be transmitted in school settings... It's very, very low risk to kids who are going about their usual activities like attending school and other activities like that."

Should a child be exposed to monkeypox, Zerr advised that parents stay in contact with their child's pediatrician and be on the lookout for any suspicious rashes.

"If you know your child's been exposed to a confirmed case of monkey pox, then you do really want to be keeping a very close eye on them," Zerr said. "I think that that would be a reasonable strategy to keep your kid at home if they develop new signs and symptoms of illness. And then, if they develop a rash, especially a pustular rash, connect with your child's primary care provider.

Thus far, the majority of cases in the current monkeypox outbreak have been detected in gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men. However, health officials have repeatedly stressed that anyone can contract the virus, and although the risk of monkeypox remains low among young children and adolescents, they too can test positive if they have been exposed.

Across the globe, more than 47,000 cases of monkeypox have now been reported, including 17,400 cases in the U.S. -- the most of any country, according to the CDC.

Monkeypox primarily spreads through prolonged skin-to-skin contact with infected people's lesions or bodily fluids, according to the CDC. The virus can also spread through bedding and towels contaminated by infected lesions.

In addition to lesions, which can appear like pimples or blisters, the most common symptoms associated with monkeypox are swollen lymph nodes, fever, headache, fatigue and muscle aches.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Bomb targets Australia diplomats Baghdad</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/explosive-detonates-baghdad-targets-australian-diplomats-88952751">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/explosive-detonates-baghdad-targets-australian-diplomats-88952751</a>
GIST	<p>BAGHDAD -- A small homemade explosive detonated on Friday near Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone as an Australian diplomatic convoy made its way into the area, two security officials told The Associated Press.</p> <p>No injuries were reported.</p> <p>The blast happened amid efforts by the Australian diplomatic mission in Iraq to mediate between influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and an Iran-backed faction of rival Shiite parties, according to the security officials, to end one of Iraq's worst political crises in recent years.</p>



	<p>Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad al-Sahaf condemned the attack, and said Iraq was committed to protecting all diplomatic missions in the country.</p> <p>Caretaker Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi has been unsuccessful in trying to bring the quarreling groups to a settlement. Al-Sadr's party declined to attend a meeting Al-Kadhimi held last week.</p> <p>Despite the explosion, the Australian convoy was able to enter the Green Zone.</p> <p>The followers al-Sadr and his political rivals, a coalition of Iran-backed Shiite groups called the Coordination Framework, have been at odds since after last year's parliamentary elections.</p> <p>Al-Sadr won the largest share of seats in the October vote but failed to form a majority government, leading to what has become one of the worst political crises in Iraq in recent years. His supporters in late July stormed the parliament and have held frequent protests there.</p> <p>The firebrand clerics supporters have regularly protested, demanding the dissolution of parliament and early elections.</p> <p>On Tuesday, Al-Sadr's supporters pitched tents and protested outside the Supreme Judicial Council, accusing it of being politicized in favor of their Iran-backed allies.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Iran, Russia forging tighter alliance</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-and-russia-are-cementing-an-alliance-with-grain-drones-and-satellites-11661605200">https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-and-russia-are-cementing-an-alliance-with-grain-drones-and-satellites-11661605200</a>
GIST	<p>TEHRAN—Iran and Russia are forging tighter ties than ever, as their <a href="#">international isolation</a> drives the two staunch American foes toward more trade and military cooperation, alarming Washington.</p> <p>In July, Iran became the world's largest buyer of Russian wheat. This month, Russia launched an Iranian satellite into space in a rare success for Tehran's space program. And last week, Iran's military hosted joint drone exercises with Russian forces, as the U.S. warns Moscow is preparing to receive <a href="#">Iranian drones</a> for use in the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>The flurry of activity shows how the Ukraine war has accelerated efforts to bring together Russia and Iran, which have often talked of closer ties but with few results. The two states share an opposition to a U.S.-led world order and both suffer from tough U.S. sanctions. But until this year, their relations <a href="#">had been weighed down</a> by opposing agendas in Syria, by Iran's historic suspicion of foreign interference and by Russia's historical role as the dominant power in Central Asia and the Caucasus.</p> <p>A closer Russia-Iran alliance would help both countries mitigate the impact of Western sanctions by finding new markets for their products and boosting military cooperation that could help <a href="#">Moscow's war in Ukraine</a> and Tehran's <a href="#">regional activities</a> in the Middle East. U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan recently called the burgeoning Russia-Iran ties a "profound threat."</p> <p>The growing ties were punctuated by Russian President <a href="#">Vladimir Putin</a>'s <a href="#">visit to Tehran in July</a>, in his second foreign trip since he ordered the invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi traveled to Moscow in January, when the two countries pledged more economic and military cooperation.</p> <p>Overall, bilateral trade is up 10% between Russia and Iran this year. In 2021, trade between the two countries surged 80% higher to \$4 billion, according to Russia.</p> <p>Some observers say that apart from food and military cooperation, the relationship still has a long way to go. China traded \$14.8 billion worth of non-oil goods and services with Tehran last year, according to</p>

Beijing's customs statistics, and the two countries have a 25-year, \$400 billion trade agreement. China is also major consumer of Russian oil that is being shunned in much of the Western world.

Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, chief executive of the Bourse & Bazaar Foundation, a think tank focused on economic diplomacy, said a revived nuclear deal—which Washington and Tehran [appear on the cusp of clinching](#)—could spark more Russian investment in Iran.

Russians have been flocking to the Islamic Republic in recent months, often to discuss ways to circumvent sanctions, say Iranian businessmen. Russian is often heard in Tehran's shops and hotels these days, as Iran remains open to Russian travelers who have been cut off from much of the West.

At the city's grand bazaar, Hossein, a carpet seller, said the number of Russian customers has doubled since February and now make up half its customer base. In the lobby of a luxury hotel in Tehran, the only Europeans were Russians who brought their laptops for a business meeting with Iranians in black suits.

Deals on the table include Iran selling clothing to Russian buyers to replace Western brands and automotive spare parts to embattled Russian car makers. Discussions have been held of an export corridor running from Russia to India through Iran and to set up a banking system totally insulated from U.S. sanctions.

Tehran's state-run National Iranian Oil Co. has also signed a deal with Russia's energy giant Gazprom PJSC to invest \$40 billion in Iran's natural-gas industry.

Both countries need trade partners badly, even if they are limited in their ability to help each other. The International Monetary Fund forecasts that Russian gross domestic product will contract 6% this year. The IMF expects Iran's GDP to grow by 3% this year but the country is struggling with 50% inflation and a currency that hit a record low against the U.S. dollar this year.

Iran offers Russia expertise in avoiding Western sanctions while Moscow appears to have given Iran preference for agricultural exports amid fears of food shortages.

Among the most important signs of warming economic ties: Iran surpassed Egypt and Turkey as Russia's largest wheat buyer in July, scooping up twice as much as these two countries with deliveries of 360,000 metric tons, according to data-intelligence company Kpler.

Iran and Russia have both struggled to find banks to handle their commodities transactions, trade experts say. Their blossoming trade is a marriage of convenience at a time when European traders shun new contracts in Russian grain and other commodities.

"Iran can only buy wheat from a limited number of sources," said Masha Belikova, a grains analyst at commodity price reporting agency Fastmarkets in London. "When the war started, Russia was targeted by sanctions and faced payments issues. Iran was one of the few countries ready to accept" such political risk.

The increased military cooperation between Iran and Russia has alarmed U.S. officials.

Iran's hard-line Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is hosting a competition of military unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, with the Russian army at their air base in Kashan, south of Tehran. Iranian state television showed IRGC members flying Russian flags as they led a parade of Moscow's soldiers.

The White House has alleged Iran hosted a Russian delegation in Kashan in June to showcase its attack drones. It says Iran is training Russian soldiers to potentially use the weapons in Ukraine.

Drone technologies designed by Tehran have emerged as a key instrument of asymmetrical attacks carried by the Islamic Republic against Saudi oil fields and by allies in the Gaza Strip, Iraq and Yemen.

	<p>Tehran denies plans to assist Russia's war in Ukraine. Brig. Gen. Ali Balali, a top IRGC air-force officer, said last week the drone drills were aimed at fighting global terrorism. The military UAV competition, which also involves Russian allies Armenia and Belarus, was first launched in 2015 but is normally hosted in the former Soviet Union rather than Iran.</p> <p>On Aug. 9, Russia launched an Iranian satellite from a facility it controls in Kazakhstan. Iran says the satellite will help bolster "management and planning capacities" in agriculture, water resources, disaster management or border monitoring.</p> <p>The U.S. suspects the satellite could be used by Tehran to help monitor Ukrainian troop movements.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Russia economic collapse on slow burn</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/28/business/russia-economy-ukraine-six-months/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/28/business/russia-economy-ukraine-six-months/index.html</a>
GIST	<p><b>London (CNN Business)</b>Six months after invading Ukraine, Russia is bogged down in a war of attrition it didn't anticipate but it is having success on another front — <a href="#">its oil-dependent economy</a> is in a <a href="#">deep recession</a> but proving <a href="#">far more resilient than expected</a>.</p> <p>"I'm driving through Moscow and the same traffic jams are there as before," says Andrey Nechaev, who was Russia's economy minister in the early 1990s.</p> <p>The readiness of China and India to snap up cheap Russian oil has helped, but Nechaev and other analysts say Russia's economy has started to decline and is likely facing a prolonged period of stagnation as a consequence of Western sanctions.</p> <p>On the surface, not much has changed, bar a few empty storefronts that once housed <a href="#">Western brands that have fled the country in their hundreds</a>. McDonalds (<a href="#">MCD</a>) is now called "Vkusno i tochka", or "Tasty, and that's it" and Starbucks (<a href="#">SBUX</a>) cafes are now gradually reopening under the barely disguised brand Stars Coffee.</p> <p>The exodus of Western businesses, and wave after wave of punishing Western sanctions targeting Russia's vital energy exports and its financial system, are having an impact, but not in the way many had expected.</p> <p>Nechaev, who presided over some of Russia's most turbulent economic times and helped steer its transition to a market economy, credits some of this to <a href="#">the central bank</a>.</p> <p>The ruble did crash to a record low to the US dollar earlier this year in the wake of the invasion as the West froze about half of Russia's \$600 billion foreign currency reserves. But it's bounced back since to its strongest level against the US dollar since 2018. (Remember President Joe Biden's threat of reducing it to <a href="#">"rubble"</a>?)</p> <p>That's largely the result of aggressive capital controls and rate hikes back in the spring, much of which have now been reversed. Interest rates are now lower than before the war, and the central bank says inflation, which peaked at almost 18% in April, is slowing and will be between 12% and 15% for the full year.</p> <p>The central bank has also revised up its GDP forecast for the year, and now expects it to shrink by 4% to 6%. In April, the forecast was for an 8% to 10% contraction. The International Monetary Fund also now predicts a 6% contraction.</p> <p>It helped that the Kremlin had eight years to prepare, spurred by the sanctions the West imposed after Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014.</p> <p>"The exit of Mastercard, Visa, it barely had an impact on domestic payments because the central bank had its own alternative system of payments," says Nechaev.</p>

Russia set up the Mir credit card, and its own transaction processing system in 2017.

And there's a reason Russian fans of McDonalds and Starbucks are still able to get their fast-food fix, says Chris Weafer, founding partner of Macro Advisory Ltd, a consultancy advising multinational businesses in Russia and Eurasia.

Since 2014, many Western brands in Russia caved to government pressure and localized some or all of their supply chains. So when these companies left, it was relatively easy for Russian buyers to buy them and keep running them simply by changing the wrapper and packaging.

"Same people, same products, same supply," says Weafer.

It's not an entirely watertight strategy, though.

The re-branded McDonald's stores reported a shortage of French fries in mid-July, when Russia's potato harvest fell short, and foreign suppliers wouldn't fill the gap due to sanctions.

### **Can Russia's energy boom continue?**

Fast food continuity is one thing. Russia's longer term stability rests on its energy sector, still by far the biggest source of government revenues.

To say high energy prices have so far insulated Russia would be an understatement.

The International Energy Agency says Russia's revenues from selling oil and gas to Europe doubled between March and July this year, compared to an average of recent years. That's despite declining volumes. IEA data shows gas deliveries to Europe are down by about 75% over the past 12 months.

Oil is a different matter. The IEA's March prediction that 3 million barrels a day of Russian oil would come off the market from April because of sanctions, or the threat of them, has not materialized. Exports have held up, though Rystad Energy analysts note a slight drop over the summer.

The major factor has been Russia's ability to find new markets in Asia.

According to Houmayoun Falakshali from commodities consultancy Kpler, most of Russia's seaborne oil exports have gone to Asia since the start of the war. In July, the share was 56%, compared to just 37% in July 2021.

Between January and July this year, China increased its seaborne imports of heavily-discounted Russian Urals crude by 40%, compared to the same period last year, according to Kpler data. That's despite China's initial efforts [to avoid the appearance of taking sides](#) in Russia's war on Ukraine. India's seaborne imports from Russia are up more than 1,700% over the same period, according to Kpler. Russia has also been increasing gas exports to China through a Siberian pipeline.

What happens when Europe's embargo on 90% of Russian oil comes into force in December, will be critical. An estimated 2 million barrels a day of Russian oil will be in limbo, and while it's likely some of that will go to Asia, experts doubt whether demand will be high enough to absorb it all.

Falakshali says China cannot buy much more Russian oil than it already is, because of a domestic slowdown in demand, and because it simply doesn't need much more of the specific type of oil Russia exports.

Price will play a critical role, too, in whether Russia can afford to keep discounting to secure new markets. "A discount of 30% from \$120 a barrel is one thing," Nechaev points out. "A discount from \$70 is another matter."

### 'Slower burn'

While global inflation is helping Russia's energy sector, it's hurting its people. Much like the rest of Europe, Russians are already suffering a cost of living crisis, made much worse by the war in Ukraine.

Nechaev, who helped steer Russia through a much more dramatic economic collapse in the 1990s, is worried.

"In terms of the standard of living, if you measure it by real incomes, we have gone backwards by about 10 years," he says.

The Russian government is spending to try to combat this. In May, it announced it would raise pensions and the minimum wage by 10%.

It's set up a system where employees of companies that have "suspended their activities" can temporarily transfer to another employer without breaking their employment contract. And it's spending 17 billion rubles (\$280 million) buying the bonds of Russian airlines, crippled by airspace bans and sanctions preventing maintenance and the supply of parts by foreign manufacturers.

It's technology sanctions, like those affecting the airline industry that may have the most profound impact on Russia's long-term economic prospects. In June, US commerce secretary Gina Raimondo said global semiconductor exports to Russia had collapsed by 90% since the war started. That is crippling production of everything from cars to computers, and will, experts say, put it further behind in the global technology race.

"The impact of sanctions will be more a slower burn rather than a quick hit," says Weafer. "Russia is now looking at potentially a long period of stagnation."

Nechaev is even more definitive. "Right now, the economic decline has started," he says.

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HEADLINE	08/26 CDC: 72% in US should consider masks
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2022-08-26/cdc-72-of-americans-should-be-masking-or-considering-the-mitigation-measure">https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2022-08-26/cdc-72-of-americans-should-be-masking-or-considering-the-mitigation-measure</a>
GIST	<p>The number of Americans who should be masking while indoors in public is on the decline, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>According to the CDC's COVID-19 <a href="#">community levels</a>, nearly 24% of the population should be masking while indoors. Almost 48% of the U.S. should consider masking while inside public spaces based on their risk for severe COVID-19.</p> <p>The total percentage of people who should be masking or considering the measure – close to 72% of the U.S. population – has been <a href="#">declining</a> for weeks. Last week, the number was 78%, while the week before that it was 82%.</p> <p>The declining percentages come as new COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations are also decreasing, suggesting that the latest coronavirus wave in the U.S. <a href="#">has peaked</a>. The U.S. is averaging about 90,000 new cases a day, which is down from nearly 130,000 a day one month ago.</p> <p>However, the vast majority of the country – 91% of counties – remains in an area of “high” COVID-19 <a href="#">transmission</a>, according to the CDC.</p> <p>But the omicron subvariant BA.5 appears to be <a href="#">plateauing</a> in the U.S. Data from the CDC shows that it has remained steady at about 88% of new cases over the past three weeks.</p>

	Updated coronavirus booster shots targeting BA.5 and BA.4 are expected to roll out in the U.S. in the coming weeks. Both <a href="#">Moderna</a> and <a href="#">Pfizer</a> this week asked the Food and Drug Administration to authorize such shots, which the Biden administration has pushed as having the potential to protect against infection as well as against severe disease.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Boosters roll out before testing completed?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/latest-covid-boosters-are-set-to-roll-out-before-human-testing-is-completed-11661679003?mod=hp_lead_pos10">https://www.wsj.com/articles/latest-covid-boosters-are-set-to-roll-out-before-human-testing-is-completed-11661679003?mod=hp_lead_pos10</a>
GIST	<p>The Food and Drug Administration is expected to authorize <a href="#">new Covid-19 booster shots</a> this week without a staple of its normal decision-making process: data from a study showing whether the shots were safe and worked in humans.</p> <p>The shots, modified to target the <a href="#">latest versions of the Omicron variant</a>, won't have finished testing in humans when the FDA makes its decisions.</p> <p>Instead, the <a href="#">agency plans to assess the shots</a> using data from other sources such as research in mice, the profiles of the original vaccines and the performance of earlier iterations of boosters targeting older forms of Omicron.</p> <p>“Real world evidence from the current mRNA Covid-19 vaccines, which have been administered to millions of individuals, show us that the vaccines are safe,” FDA Commissioner Robert Califf said in a recent tweet. The FDA pointed to Dr. Califf’s tweets when asked for comment.</p> <p>Clearance of the doses, without data from human testing known as clinical trials, is similar to the approach the FDA takes with flu shots, which are updated annually to keep up with mutating flu viruses.</p> <p>The approach has raised concerns, however, among some vaccine experts who have urged the agency to wait.</p> <p>“I’m uncomfortable that we would move forward—that we would give millions or tens of millions of doses to people—based on mouse data,” said Paul Offit, an FDA adviser and director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.</p> <p>The comparison with flu vaccines isn’t sound, Dr. Offit said, because flu viruses mutate so rapidly that shots from one year don’t offer protection for the next, while currently available Covid-19 shots continue to keep people out of the hospital.</p> <p>In addition to evaluating the boosters without clinical-trial data, the FDA won’t convene another element from its earlier Covid-19 vaccine reviews: a meeting of advisers who make recommendations whether the agency should authorize a shot.</p> <p>The FDA scrapped the meeting, Dr. Califf said in his tweets on the subject, because the committee discussed the matter in June, and the agency doesn’t have new questions warranting its input.</p> <p>The Covid-19 vaccines available in the U.S., which were first authorized for use in December 2020, haven’t been modified until now, though the virus they were designed to target has evolved.</p> <p>The shots held up well against earlier strains, researchers found, but weren’t as effective against the newest Omicron subvariants like BA.5.</p> <p>In planning for a fall booster campaign, federal health authorities in late June directed Pfizer Inc. and its partner BioNTech SE, and Moderna Inc. to update their shots to target BA.5, an Omicron subvariant called BA.4 and the original strain of the virus.</p>



“We’ve validated the process several times over and continue to produce safe and effective vaccines against Covid-19,” a Pfizer spokeswoman said. Moderna said all current data indicates its shots are safe and effective.

Human trials for Moderna’s vaccine targeting the subvariants have started, and for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are expected to start this month, the companies have said. Results won’t be available, however, before the U.S. government’s planned fall booster campaign.

“If we waited for clinical-trial results, thank you very much, we’d get them in the spring. It takes time to do clinical trials,” said William Schaffner, professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and a nonvoting liaison to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention committee that will decide whether to recommend the shots, should the FDA sign off. “This is just an updating of the previous vaccine that we used.”

The retooled shots are similar to the original shots, but customized to fight the latest variants, much like keys that are nearly identical but have slightly different ridges and valleys, said John Grabenstein, director of scientific communications for Immunize.org, a nonprofit that seeks to boost immunization rates.

The similarities make it very reasonable for regulators to weigh the overwhelmingly safe track record of the original series when considering the new shots, he said.

The FDA has reviewed test results from a shot that [Moderna modified to target](#) an early version of Omicron as well as the ancestral strain of the coronavirus. The study found the shot generated a significant amount of antibodies in humans compared with the company’s currently available booster shot. That [shot is now approved in the U.K.](#)

The agency also looked at human data from Pfizer and BioNTech finding that their experimental shots, updated to target an earlier form of Omicron, also [boosted antibody levels significantly](#). The companies have submitted one of those shots to the U.K., EU and Canada for authorization, Pfizer has said.

Such findings give the FDA confidence that the newest modified shots will also work well, said a person familiar with the agency’s deliberations.

“As we know from prior experience, strain changes can be made without affecting safety,” Dr. Califf said in a tweet.

Dr. Offit, however, said he would like to wait for clinical-trial data showing the shots are effective before asking people to take them.

“If you have some evidence that this is likely to be of value, sure,” he said. “But if you don’t have evidence, and you know that the current vaccine does offer protection against severe disease, I don’t think it’s fair to ask people to take risks.”

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HEADLINE	08/28 Russia moves to reinforce stalled assault
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-moves-to-reinforce-its-stalled-assault-on-ukraine-11661686452?mod=hp_lead_pos9">https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-moves-to-reinforce-its-stalled-assault-on-ukraine-11661686452?mod=hp_lead_pos9</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine—Russia is moving to significantly bolster its forces in Ukraine as its campaign to secure territory in the country’s east and south stalls ahead of planned plebiscites on annexation by Russia.</p> <p>A series of volunteer battalions formed in recent weeks across Russia is preparing to deploy to Ukraine, officials and military analysts say, including a major new ground-forces formation called the 3rd Army Corps intended to shore up a new offensive in eastern Ukraine and reinforce troops holding off a Ukrainian counteroffensive in the south.</p>

Footage posted online purporting to show the 3rd Army Corps training at a Russian military base in Mulino, some 250 miles east of Moscow, displays modern weaponry of a kind rarely deployed to Ukraine, analysts say. However, the U.S.-based think tank the Institute for the Study of War played down the formation's chances of shifting [the military balance in Ukraine](#), saying in a Saturday report that "better equipment does not necessarily make more effective forces when the personnel are not well-trained or disciplined."

Conflict Intelligence Team, an open-source investigative group, on Saturday posted photographs of Russian military equipment on railcars, including Buk surface-to-air missile systems and T-90 tanks, that it said were heading to Russia's border with eastern Ukraine, citing train data published by Russia's railways service.

The push to shore up Russia's forces comes as Moscow's campaign in Ukraine continues to stall and the Kremlin [scrambles to find fresh troops](#) willing to help it regain momentum in a war now in its seventh month. It also comes as [Kyiv continues strikes](#) against Russian military infrastructure on occupied territory.

In parallel to a nationwide recruitment campaign aimed at filling the undertrained battalions, Kremlin-linked military companies in Russia such as Wagner Group, which [have led major offensives](#) in eastern Ukraine, are scouring Russia's prisons for inmates willing to fight, according to human-rights workers and Russian media.

In May, Russia scrapped the age limit for first-time recruits, allowing citizens over 40 to sign up. On Thursday, President [Vladimir Putin](#) ordered Russia's military to increase its ranks by 137,000 soldiers starting in 2023, increasing the number of troops to 1.15 million from 1.01 million, according to official figures.

Retired U.S. Navy Admiral James Stavridis, appearing on Sunday's telecast of NBC's "Meet the Press," said the troop situation reflects Russia's dire straits and could encourage Ukraine to mount a major counteroffensive soon.

"Now [Mr. Putin] needs to bring new troops just to fight," said Mr. Stavridis, who formerly served as the supreme allied commander of NATO. "On the strategic level, I think he's failed in this war. I don't see him recovering, but he still wants to focus on taking Donbas. That is his new objective and he needs new soldiers to do that."

But the campaign to expand the military's ranks has caused tension. In Mulino, a town of around 13,000 where the 3rd Army Corps has been training new recruits, residents have been taking to social media to complain about the men wandering the streets drunk after dark and harassing local women.

"The whole village is suffering because of these volunteers," a woman identifying herself as Ksenia Glotova wrote on Russian social network VK recently. "They walk around in groups and harass. It would be one thing if they were being trained and stayed on their base. But they're walking around drunk from 11 a.m."

"They're proud of the fact they're going there [to Ukraine]," another user, Yekaterina Horoshavina, wrote. "They say they're going to defend us, but based on what we've seen we won't be sleeping very calmly."

As its forces in the east steel for an intensified Russian push, Ukraine has continued to target military infrastructure in areas occupied by Russian forces. On Sunday, the exiled mayor of Russian-held Melitopol in the south, Ivan Fedorov, said a Ukrainian strike had hit a major Russian military base on the territory of a car factory in the city.

"The enemy is feeling uneasy on our territory," Mr. Fedorov said in a TV interview on Sunday. "We're banking on them soon leaving our temporarily occupied Melitopol in a gesture of goodwill."

	<p>Russia didn't immediately comment on the alleged Ukrainian strike in Melitopol, which comes as Russian-installed officials in the surrounding Zaporizhzhia region and neighboring Kherson continue preparations for what they are referring to as referendums on the question of joining Russia. Ukraine has denounced the plans as an illegal effort to annex Ukrainian territory, and officials in Kyiv have said residents will effectively be voting at gunpoint.</p> <p>The war in Ukraine's east has settled into a violent stalemate, with Russia's troops exhausted by grinding offensives and Ukrainian resistance. The Ukrainians aim to stymie the Russians in the east and probe in the south in search of a breakthrough.</p> <p>In recent days there has also been mounting tension around Europe's largest nuclear-power plant. Repeated shelling in the vicinity of the Zaporizhzhia plant culminated in an outage on Thursday that officials in Moscow and Kyiv blamed on each other.</p> <p>Ukrainian workers at the plant reconnected two reactors on Friday as inspectors from the U.N.'s nuclear agency prepared for an emergency visit this week following months of wrangling over access to the facility, which is under Russian occupation.</p> <p>Ukraine's nuclear-energy regulator Energoatom said on Saturday that Russia had continued shelling the site over the past day. "The damage is currently being investigated," it said. Russia has said Ukraine is behind the shelling.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Airlines cut schedules, other flight curbs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/airlines-keep-flight-cuts-other-curbs-as-industry-woes-drag-on-11661688001?mod=hp_lead_pos3">https://www.wsj.com/articles/airlines-keep-flight-cuts-other-curbs-as-industry-woes-drag-on-11661688001?mod=hp_lead_pos3</a>
GIST	<p>Airlines and airports around the world have been extending passenger caps and cuts to flight schedules through the fall and winter, attempting to steady operations after a wild summer of global travel disruptions that show signs of easing.</p> <p>The aviation industry <a href="#">struggled to keep up</a> with a crush of travelers that took to the skies this summer. That pressure is beginning to let up as the peak vacation season ebbs and as some of the emergency measures the industry took to reduce capacity begin to make a difference.</p> <p>Airports <a href="#">such as London Heathrow</a>, struggling with labor shortages and other problems, capped the number of passengers allowed to depart daily, forcing airlines to cut capacity. In many places that has reduced long lines and led to fewer <a href="#">lost bags</a> and flight cancellations and delays.</p> <p>U.S. airlines' rate of cancellations fell from 2.7% of flights in June to 1.7% in July, though severe storms throughout August led to <a href="#">another uptick in delays and cancellations</a>, according to FlightAware, a flight-tracking site.</p> <p>Despite the recent improvements, travel consultants say they are bracing for flight disruptions for months to come as the industry balances demand with a workforce that is still ramping back up after pandemic-related cutbacks.</p> <p>"I don't have any reason to believe that service levels are going to come back to where they used to be anytime soon," said Brandon Strauss, a business-travel industry consultant and president of CapTrav, a travel-software company.</p> <p>Carriers globally have been cutting fall and winter schedules, trying to better match the number of planned flights with staffing and other resources. <a href="#">JetBlue Airways</a> Corp. has extended some flight-reduction plans into early next year. <a href="#">American Airlines Group</a> Inc. had expected to be able to restore about 95% of its 2019 flying levels this year. Last month, <a href="#">it revised that down</a> to 91.5%, at the midpoint of its guidance.</p>

JetBlue President Joanna Geraghty said some of the constraints are beyond airlines' control. JetBlue now has record-high staffing levels, including 14% more pilots than in 2019, and its cancellation rate has fallen toward 2019 levels, she said. But the airline still can't fly as much as it once did, and as much as demand warrants.

"We are preparing for a reality where there is just a more fragile infrastructure," Ms. Geraghty said, pointing to staffing constraints within air-traffic control that have caused delays. "We'd love to be flying more."

The Federal Aviation Administration has said it is adding controllers where demand has increased and is on target to meet hiring goals, but weather and heavy traffic volumes, rather than air-traffic-control staffing, account for the majority of delays.

In Europe, where delays, cancellations and airport congestion were worse than in the U.S., carriers including [British Airways](#), [Deutsche Lufthansa](#) AG and discounter [Wizz Air Holdings](#) PLC have reined in their schedules to avoid a continuation of the summer turmoil. Airlines also have said they want to limit the millions of dollars in costs they have incurred to reimburse customers, pay out compensation and cover other bills associated with the disruptions.

British Airways, a unit of [International Consolidated Airlines Group](#) SA, last week said it [would cut more than 10,000 flights](#) over the winter season, running from Oct. 30 through March 25. Those cuts follow more than 30,000 flight reductions it made this summer to cope with staff shortages and to meet the caps imposed at Heathrow. The airport's chief executive, John Holland-Kaye, has said the hub could keep the restrictions in place for a year into next summer.

British Airways, which had previously planned to return to 2019 levels of flying across the Atlantic—its most important route—by the third quarter of this year, is now scheduled to reach that point at the start of January next year, said Luis Gallego, chief executive of the airline's parent company. As of July, BA had hired 4,000 new staff in 2022. It needs about 7,000 by the end of the year.

Frankfurt Airport, which is continuing its own limits on the number of flights allowed to depart the hub until the end of the summer, is in talks with airlines over extending those restrictions into winter, according to a spokesman. Both Amsterdam Schiphol and Heathrow [have extended their restrictions](#) through October.

Airlines and airports have hired thousands of new workers to replace those who left during the height of the pandemic in 2020. Staffing levels at U.S. carriers are nearly back to where they were in 2019.

Still, airlines are finding their operations aren't back up to speed. Some tasks take longer with more inexperienced workers still learning their roles. British Airways said it is seeing an "experience lag" with new recruits at Heathrow. New security staff take longer than before to process passengers, and ground handlers need more time to unload baggage and maneuver ramps. Carriers have also had to work through long training times for pilots and other workers, sometimes exacerbated by shortages of instructors.

Jeff Ward, founder of New York-based leisure-travel agency Savvy Navigator, said he is still seeing airlines regularly pulling scheduled flights, including for bookings in the fall. He is expecting the disruption to continue and is advising passengers against adding complications such as checked bags.

Meanwhile, a new wave of Covid-19 infections has hit airlines in the Asia-Pacific region just as demand in the Southern Hemisphere sees a seasonal jump. [Qantas Airways](#) Ltd. and [Air New Zealand](#) Ltd. said they are facing higher sickness rates among staff. Air New Zealand said earlier this month it would cancel flights over the next six months as Covid-19 and influenza have swept through its workforce.

"Our flights are full, and we can't bring aircraft out of storage fast enough," Qantas Chief Executive Alan Joyce said on Thursday.

HEADLINE	08/28 Retailers: inventory pileup; discounts, sales
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/inventory-pileup-uneasy-shoppers-put-retailers-in-jeopardy-11661690106?mod=hp_lead_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/inventory-pileup-uneasy-shoppers-put-retailers-in-jeopardy-11661690106?mod=hp_lead_pos1</a>
GIST	<p>For retailers, it is a season of discontent.</p> <p>From <a href="#">Walmart</a> Inc. to <a href="#">Nordstrom</a> Inc., retailers have a glut of inventory and are discounting items to clear out space for holiday goods. Many have already lowered profit expectations for the year and are working to cut costs as consumers are pulling back spending in categories such as apparel and home goods ahead of the key year-end shopping season.</p> <p><a href="#">Best Buy</a> Co. <a href="#">warned investors last month</a> that shoppers are buying fewer TVs and other electronics as they pay more for gas and groceries. <a href="#">Macy's</a> Inc. CEO Jeff Gennette said last week customers across income levels are pulling back on purchases. Days later <a href="#">Dollar General</a> Corp. executives said <a href="#">people are trading down</a> to less expensive versions of everyday items, such as powdered detergents, and putting more purchases on credit cards.</p> <p>Companies are attempting to balance serving consumers who are eager to spend despite rising prices while also being sensitive to shoppers who need or want to be more budget conscious. As a result, retail executives and consultants predict the slowest sales growth in the period between November and January in years.</p> <p>“The uncertainty moving forward is significant,” said Erik Nordstrom, chief executive of department-store chain Nordstrom, on a call with analysts last Tuesday. “There’s cases to be made that things could get better pretty quickly, and then there’s credible cases to be made that it’s going to be tough.”</p> <p>Recent economic data has muddled the picture of consumer health. Gasoline prices are down from their June peak but are higher than a year ago, and inflation remains near four-decade highs. Unemployment, however, remains low when compared with historic averages and wages are rising.</p> <p>Consumer spending in July increased at a slower pace than in the previous month, due in part to falling gas prices, according to government data. Yet signs are emerging that people are feeling better about the economy overall, as the University of Michigan’s survey of consumer sentiment showed improvement for the second month in a row.</p> <p>The tumultuous environment is unlike what retailers have encountered in previous economic slumps and inflationary periods, said David Bassuk, a co-leader of the retail practice at the consulting firm AlixPartners. While the 2008 financial crisis was a clear downturn, he said, “this one has pockets of real strength.”</p> <p>Many retailers banked on big sales and profit growth earlier in the pandemic. People stockpiled items such as toilet paper and other home goods. Others who held back spending early in the health crisis soon bought casual gear and luxury items, bolstered by savings on travel and government stimulus funds.</p> <p>Rising prices for food, fuel and a host of other goods and services have damped consumer moods. Shoppers are buying, but paying more for fewer goods. They are also giving priority to food and other need-based purchases over patio furniture and gadgets.</p> <p>Competition for shoppers’ attention and dollars will be fierce later this year, retail executives and consultants say. Categories including sleep wear, men and women’s active wear, and casual sportswear are heavily discounted at many retailers, Macy’s finance chief, Adrian Mitchell, told analysts last Tuesday.</p> <p>Deloitte LLP is likely to predict a slight sales increase for the holidays, largely reflecting higher prices, said Rod Sides, global head of the consulting firm’s insights practice. “I think there is a dose of reality coming back” to retailers, he said.</p>

Alex Victor, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., said a tighter budget means he won't replace his dilapidated couch, or buy new clothes, even though his wardrobe has become ill-fitting and outdated. Mr. Victor, 39 years old, who commutes about 30 miles to Miami for his job as a firefighter, said he didn't buy much during the pandemic and was preparing to refresh his wardrobe when gas and grocery prices shot up.

To save money this Christmas, Mr. Victor said he would hand make gifts using newly learned leather working. "My job is stable and my pay hasn't changed, but it's almost as if I feel I've gotten a 20% pay cut with gas prices and inflation," he said.

Consumers surveyed by PricewaterhouseCoopers said they planned to spend slightly less this holiday season than a year ago. The firm predicts that people will spend less on gift giving and more on meals and celebratory events and roughly the same amount on travel compared with last year.

Millennials who responded were an exception, PwC's Kelly Pedersen said. "Many people who have gotten higher pay and salaries are in the millennial group," he said, and because younger people are more inclined to live in cities, they have been less impacted by higher gas prices.

Shoppers are still spending ahead of the holidays, but often buying fewer items at higher prices and shifting their spending priorities. At Walmart, sales in the latest quarter rose, helped in part by higher prices and slightly more shopper visits, executives said.

[Petco Health & Wellness](#) Co., which has been riding a wave of pandemic pet adoptions, reported its slowest sales growth since the retailer went public in early 2021.

"People are saying, 'I might let that collar go, it's a little frayed and a little dirty, but given gas prices I'll hold off until my next trip,' " said Chief Executive Ron Coughlin in an interview. He said the industry saw a similar trend ahead of the recession more than a decade ago, but he expects the situation to be temporary.

Retailers want their current inventory situation to be temporary. Many are rushing to unload products to prepare stores and warehouses for the holidays, but still have work to do.

Walmart, the country's largest retailer by revenue, will have store inventory in good shape to make room for holiday items but expects some overhang until next fiscal year, said company executives on an earnings call earlier this month. After discounting goods in recent months, Walmart still has around \$1.5 billion of inventory it would like to sell, executives said.

Earlier this month [Target](#) Corp. said net earnings fell 90% in the quarter ended July 30 as it worked to quickly sell excess inventory at a discount. Target expects a further \$200 million in expenses related to offloading excess inventory, the company said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 UW studies monkeypox: pets to humans</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3608306/first-recorded-case-monkeypox-spreading-humans-pets/">https://mynorthwest.com/3608306/first-recorded-case-monkeypox-spreading-humans-pets/</a>
GIST	<p>There's been at least one <a href="#">report</a> of a person with Monkeypox who may have passed the virus to a dog.</p> <p>Now, University of Washington scientists want to know how big a threat this is for pets in the Puget Sound Region.</p> <p>They're <a href="#">offering</a> to screen the pets of people in King County who have contracted Monkeypox.</p> <p>Doctor Peter Rabinowitz says that should let researchers know, "how big a problem this is, how many of the pets in households with Monkeypox patients are getting infected."</p> <p>As of Thursday morning, the Washington State Department of Health <a href="#">reported</a> 392 cases of Monkeypox in Washington state with 318 in King County.</p>



Robinowitz says, if you're concerned about spreading the virus to your pet you should take the same precautions you would take to protect other members of your family.

"You try to stay away and socially distance from that animal and sort of isolate yourself and wait until you are really not infectious before you're having contact with that animal, or ask somebody else to take care of that pet if you're potentially infectious," Robinowitz said.

Admittedly that can be hard to do, but Monkeypox is spread by close physical contact, so snuggling and cuddling with your dog is not the best idea.

And because the Monkeypox virus can be transmitted through contaminated surfaces, you should keep household items – like food dishes – separate from what your pet is using.

He stresses that there is only one known case of human-to-pet Monkeypox transmission and so far no reported cases of people catching it from their pets.

But in an interview provided by UW Medicine, Robinowitz says COVID-19 indicates people need to be cautious.

"We found when we did blood testing for antibodies that about 40% of the animals were showing positive antibodies, meaning they'd been infected with COVID-19 from exposure to people in the household."

If you're interested in the study, contact UW Medicine about taking a look at your pets. Right now they're screening dogs, cats, ferrets, rats, mice, and hamsters – but not monkeys.

It's [illegal](#) to keep a monkey as a pet in Washington state.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 FBI Mar-a-Lago raid: known, unknown</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/28/fbi-raid-mar-lago-whats-known-and-whats-unknown/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/28/fbi-raid-mar-lago-whats-known-and-whats-unknown/</a>
GIST	<p>The FBI's unprecedented raid on former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club has split the nation, with Democrats calling to 'lock him up' and Republicans railing that it's more political harassment of Mr. Trump by a partisan Justice Department.</p> <p>Since the unprecedented Aug. 8 search at Mr. Trump's residence and office at his private club in Palm Beach, Florida, some lingering questions have been answered with the DOJ's releasing the search warrant and a heavily-redacted warrant used to obtain the search warrant.</p> <p>But many questions remain unanswered.</p> <p><b>The search</b></p> <p>A search warrant unsealed earlier this month revealed that the FBI is investigating Mr. Trump for potential violations of the Espionage Act, a World War I-era law that covers crimes beyond spying, including the refusal to return national security documents upon request, mishandling classified government documents, or destroying them.</p> <p>FBI agents obtained the search warrant after they recovered 184 classified documents in 14 out of the 15 boxes Mr. Trump sent to the National Archives and Records Administration after they had been stored at Mar-a-Lago, according to an affidavit released Friday.</p> <p>Some of the documents, according to the affidavit, were marked "HCS," a category of highly-classified government information. Others were related to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which</p>

monitors threats from foreign agents, and other material that could be used “to the injury of the United States.”

Several documents also appeared to include Mr. Trump’s handwriting.

Agents became concerned that Mr. Trump had improperly taken more classified materials to “unauthorized locations” at Mar-a-Lago and told a federal judge they would likely find “evidence of obstruction” during their search.

The agents told a judge that none of the rooms at Mr. Trump’s residence had been authorized for storing classified information. They said Mr. Trump was possibly storing the materials in his residential suite, his “45 office,” and other locations at Mar-a-Lago that put them at risk of being used “to injure the United States.”

Attorney General Merrick Garland said he approved the warrant to search Mr. Trump’s residence.

While the investigation centers on the potential mishandling of classified documents, it’s unclear why the FBI pulled the trigger on a raid this month. More than 30 armed, plainclothes FBI agents swarmed Mar-a-Lago, searching Mr. Trump’s office and rummaging through his personal spaces for about nine hours. The affidavit did note that “the premises is currently closed to club members for the summer.”

The National Archives, which is supposed to receive all classified documents at the end of each president’s term, had been engaging in “ongoing communications” with Mr. Trump’s team about missing records since 2021.

Mr. Trump and his lawyers have insisted the raid was unnecessary because they were in discussions with the Justice Department about turning over the documents. The Justice Department has remained mum, but its frustration with inaction from Mr. Trump’s team is obvious in released documents.

Kel McClanahan, executive director of National Security Counselors, a nonprofit law firm specializing in national security law, said it’s clear the Justice Department was at the end of its patience.

“Every single option you can come up with for a different time they could have done the search is equally arbitrary,” he said. “So the only question is why didn’t they do it the second they found out classified documents were there? There is no significant difference to doing this in August as opposed to doing it in May as opposed to doing it in November.”

A Justice Department prosecutor said earlier this month that the Trump investigation is still in “the early stages,” meaning a resolution to the investigation likely won’t happen any time soon.

### **What was seized**

Agents who searched Mar-a-Lago found documents in a basement storage area and Mr. Trump’s office closet, according to a property receipt detailing what the FBI took from the premises.

The receipt also revealed that the FBI took 11 sets of classified documents including documents labeled “top secret” and “secret compartmented information,” two of the government’s two highest security designations.

A letter earlier this year from Debra Steidel Wall, the acting head of the National Archives, to the Justice Department revealed that Special Access Program materials were stored at Mar-a-Lago, though it is unknown if they were recovered in the search. SAP materials are so high-level, that they can only be viewed by those with a need to know and vetted in three different security clearances.

The Washington Post reported earlier that some of the most sensitive documents at Mar-a-Lago involved nuclear weapons. None of the documents released by Justice referenced the search for or recovery of such materials.

Mr. Trump has blasted The Post's reporting, saying the "nuclear weapons issue is a hoax."

"When an archivist says these documents pertain to SAP, that will set off flashing red lights across the intelligence community that they don't want anyone getting their hands on them," Mr. McClanahan said.

### **What spurred the probe**

During his only comments about the search, Mr. Garland declined to explain why he signed off on the search warrant, only saying that he "does not take such a decision lightly."

The 15 boxes of documents retrieved from Mar-a-Lago by the National Archives should have been handed over to the agency before Mr. Trump left the White House. Under a 1977 federal law, all presidents are required to hand over classified documents to the National Archives for review, storage, and possible declassifications.

The 14 of those boxes containing 184 classified documents alarmed National Archivist David Ferriero, who refer the matter to the Justice Department.

Critics say Ms. Ferriero, who has since retired, is a partisan who once changed the rules to help excuse Secretary of State Hillary Clinton when she was under scrutiny for mishandling classified documents on her private, unsecured email server.

The Justice Department was informed that the boxes contained "a lot of classified records," along with "newspapers, magazines, printed news articles, photos, miscellaneous print outs, notes, presidential correspondence, personal and post-presidential records."

An Archives official, according to the affidavit, said there was "significant concern" that "highly classified records ... were intermixed with other records."

The Justice Department then presumably opened a grand-jury investigation.

The letter from Ms. Wall, the acting national archivist, revealed that Mr. Trump's legal team was aware in April that the intelligence community wanted those documents so they could assess any damage from their being mishandled.

"Access to the materials is not only necessary for purposes of our ongoing criminal investigation, but the Executive Branch must also conduct an assessment of the potential damage resulting from the apparent manner in which these materials were stored and transported and take any necessary remedial steps," Ms. Wall wrote.

There are several reasons the intelligence community would want to review those documents, according to Mr. McClanahan of the National Security Counselors.

"Every day that classified documents are out in the world, there is an incrementally greater chance that it will be used against us," he said. "Often there is great urgency to get this information back into government control. The fact that they are trying to grab it from a former president, there is definitely a balancing act here. They did jump through all these hoops to avoid pulling the trigger."

### **Why does Trump have the documents**

Mr. Trump has not said why the documents were sent to Mar-a-Lago instead of the National Archives.

His attorneys have argued in a lawsuit against the Justice Department that Mr. Trump has executive privilege over records from his presidency. They have requested a “special master” — an independent legal analyst — to determine if the seized records are privileged.

The letter from Ms. Wall shows that Mr. Trump’s lawyers attempted to claim a “protective assertion of executive privilege,” which would have blocked the National Archives from turning over the records to the FBI that Mr. Trump had voluntarily returned earlier this year.

Whether Mr. Trump has executive privilege over those documents is a matter of debate. A 1977 Supreme Court decision said that a president cannot assert privilege over the executive branch, which includes the National Archives and FBI.

However, the Presidential Records Act gives a president the power to restrict access to some records for up to a dozen years. Early in his presidency, Mr. Trump told the National Archives he would request the 12-year restriction.

A 1988 Supreme Court ruling may benefit Mr. Trump. In that case, which involved a U.S. Navy employee who had been denied a security clearance, the court concluded the president has authority “to classify and control access to information bearing on national security.”

Mr. Trump also claimed that as president he had a standing order to declassify all documents moved from the White House to his possession. On his social media platform, Truth Social, he said that all of the documents in boxes seized by the FBI were ‘all declassified.’

Some Trump allies have backed up that claim, while other former administration officials said that’s patently untrue.

Nonetheless, Mr. Trump has not publicly released any documentation of either his standing order or that materials seized by the FBI were declassified.

### **What did Biden know**

Biden White House officials have repeatedly said they were kept out of the loop on the probe and caught off guard by the raid, stressing the independence of the Justice Department.

“I didn’t have any advance notice. None. Zero. Not one single bit,” President Biden said of the raid.

In a letter to the Trump legal team, Ms. Wall said that Mr. Biden agreed with her that attempts to assert executive privilege were baseless, the first evidence to show the president was at least aware of the investigation.

The letter, which was first published by Just the News, also showed that Mr. Biden ordered the National Archives to share all materials it had requested from Mr. Trump to be shared with the Justice Department and the FBI.

It doesn’t explicitly say, however, that Mr. Biden knew in advance about the Mar-a-Lago raid.

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HEADLINE	08/28 Russia army expansion not help much?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/28/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#putins-army-expansion-may-not-help-russia-much-us-and-british-intelligence-say">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/28/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#putins-army-expansion-may-not-help-russia-much-us-and-british-intelligence-say</a>
GIST	President Vladimir V. Putin’s decision to <a href="#">sharply increase the size of Russia’s armed forces</a> is unlikely to significantly alter the country’s fortunes in its war in Ukraine, according to American and British officials and independent military analysts.

An order announced last Thursday raises Russia's target number of active-duty service members by about 137,000, to 1.15 million, beginning in January. But that number is unlikely to be reached quickly, and Russia will be unable to train or deploy new troops effectively enough to make up for huge casualties in Ukraine, analysts said.

Mr. Putin's announcement "is unlikely to make substantive progress towards increasing Russia's combat power in Ukraine," Britain's defense intelligence agency [said on Sunday](#).

The agency cited "tens of thousands" of Russian losses on the battlefield. American and British military officials have estimated that [Russia has suffered up to 80,000 casualties](#) in Ukraine, including deaths and injuries, since Mr. Putin ordered the invasion in February. Without an expanded national draft and relying mainly on contract soldiers, the Russian armed forces have been [struggling to attract recruits](#) despite cash bonuses and other inducements, the latest British assessment said.

The assessment generally matched that of United States officials, who said last week that Mr. Putin's decree would do little good in replacing forces killed in the first six months of the war. Former American officials said the just-announced expansion was likely to take months to bring forces to the battlefield.

Russia's losses — and its inability to capture significant amounts of territory in recent weeks — have led some analysts to describe Mr. Putin's order as a sign that he has no plans to relent in Ukraine.

Even if Russia could somehow attract army recruits, it would struggle to train them quickly because some of its training units were deployed to Ukraine and suffered casualties, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington research body.

It could seek to bring in more conscripts from the roughly 130,000 mostly young men who would be called up for one year of mandatory military service in the fall, the group said, or it could absorb Russian proxy forces of the breakaway republics of eastern Ukraine into its regular army.

"The net addition to Russia's combat power in any such case would be very small," the group said in [a report last week](#).

American officials said they remained surprised that Mr. Putin had not taken any steps to widen conscription or start a forced mobilization of the Russian people. Mr. Putin has been unwilling to announce an expanded draft for fear of undercutting his support. But American officials believe the extent of Russia's losses is such that Moscow cannot achieve its strategic goal of taking over more of Ukraine without requiring one.

Supply-chain constraints and Western export controls have also made it more difficult for Russia to replace sophisticated military equipment. While the Kremlin has a practically limitless supply of artillery pieces, it is struggling to build precision cruise missiles and high-end tanks, American officials say.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Incentives: Ukrainians to stay in Russia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/28/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#putin-offers-incentives-to-ukrainians-to-come-to-russia-and-stay-there">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/28/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#putin-offers-incentives-to-ukrainians-to-come-to-russia-and-stay-there</a>
GIST	<p>President Vladimir V. Putin signed a pair of decrees on Saturday providing Ukrainians with financial benefits and the right to work, widening the Kremlin's efforts to integrate those now living in Russia and the territory it occupies.</p> <p>In one <a href="#">decree</a>, the president gave Ukrainian citizens the right to stay and work in Russia without a time limit or special work permit, provided they meet certain requirements, including passing a drug test, <a href="#">state media in Moscow reported</a>.</p>

The other measure establishes a monthly pension of about \$170 for people who have been forced to leave Ukraine since Feb. 18, a week before Russia launched its invasion and plunged the region into war. It also provides monthly pensions for disabled people and a one-time payment to pregnant women.

The decrees are the latest in a series of moves by the Kremlin that seem intended to knit the Russia-occupied territories in Ukraine's east and south closer to Russia. Moscow has been [offering Russian passports to Ukrainians in those regions](#), asking people to use the ruble as currency and rerouting the internet through Russian servers.

Kremlin-appointed local officials in occupied territories are also preparing to hold [tightly controlled referendums](#) in which the outcome of the vote is preordained to justify annexing those regions as part of the Russian Federation.

There is no precise estimate of the total number of Ukrainians currently living in Russia and in the 20 percent of Ukraine's territory that Russia is now estimated to control. Before Russia's invasion, millions lived in the parts of eastern and southern Ukraine now occupied by Moscow's forces, though many have since fled.

From the start of the war, people from Russia-held territories in Ukraine have been moving in large numbers into Russia. Some evacuated willingly, fleeing the chaos and danger of the invasion, but others were deported or compelled to move, Ukrainian officials have said.

Russia has acknowledged that 1.5 million Ukrainians are now in Russia and has asserted that they were evacuated for their own safety.

[Ukrainian and U.S. officials, however, have accused Russia of forcibly deporting hundreds of thousands of people, including children](#). In July, the American secretary of state, Antony J. Blinken, estimated Russian authorities had "interrogated, detained, and forcibly deported" between 900,000 and 1.6 million Ukrainian citizens, including 260,000 children, taking them from their homes into Russian territory. President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine has described the deportations as "one of Russia's most heinous war crimes."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 More artillery strikes near nuclear plant</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/28/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#artillery-strikes-continue-near-the-troubled-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/28/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#artillery-strikes-continue-near-the-troubled-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — Artillery barrages along a section of the front line near an imperiled nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine struck towns, ammunition dumps and a Russian military base in intense fighting overnight, Ukrainian officials said on Sunday.</p> <p>Reports of fighting all along the southern front suggested that neither side was pausing hostilities, even amid <a href="#">complex negotiations</a> to allow for a team of scientists from the International Atomic Energy Agency to visit the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, which has been repeatedly damaged by recent shelling. The plant is controlled by the Russian military but operated by Ukrainian engineers.</p> <p>The I.A.E.A. said Sunday that talks were ongoing with the goal of sending a team to the plant "in the next few days," noting that the latest shelling "once again underlined the risk of a potential nuclear accident."</p> <p>The team would assess physical damage to the plant, determine whether the main and backup safety and security systems were functional and evaluate the staff's working conditions, the I.A.E.A. said in a statement.</p> <p>Russian forces fired rocket artillery and howitzers overnight at the Ukraine-controlled town of Nikopol, across from the plant on the opposite side of the Dnipro River, which separates the two armies in the area,</p>



a local military official, Valentin Reznichenko, said. The strikes damaged several houses and cars and knocked out electricity for 1,500 residents, he said in a post on the Telegram social networking site.

In a separate assault on the town, Russian helicopters fired rockets, according to the Ukrainian military, which reported damage to a house but no casualties.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its Air Force had hit Ukrainian workshops where helicopters were being repaired in the surrounding Zaporizka region, according to the Russian state news agency RIA Novosti. The claim could not be independently verified.

Artillery shells have already hit the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, damaging auxiliary equipment and power lines but not the reactors. The strikes — for which each side blames the other — have stirred fears of a radiation release if combat rages on in this area, an expanse of farm fields along the banks of the Dnipro.

After fighting [severed one high-tension electrical line](#) last week, operators in the control rooms implemented emergency procedures to cool the reactor cores with pumps powered by diesel generators. The electrical line has since been repaired.

In a sign of mounting worry over a possible radiation release in a country [still haunted by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster](#), a Ukrainian official announced on Saturday that the government would distribute a drug, [potassium iodide](#), that can protect against some radiation poisoning, to people within 35 miles of the plant.

Plant employees and outside experts say an artillery strike would not penetrate the yard-thick reinforced concrete of the containment vessels over the sites' six reactors, but could damage the reactors' complex supporting equipment or spark fires that could burn out of control. Artillery strikes could also breach less robust containers used to store spent nuclear fuel.

Ukrainian forces also reported striking targets behind Russian lines in occupied areas of southern Ukraine. The Ukrainian military claimed to have hit two Russian ammunition dumps in Kherson Province. Retaking the city of Kherson is a goal of [a long-planned Ukrainian counteroffensive](#) in the south where the nuclear plant, used as a fortress by the Russian army, is a potential obstacle to Ukrainian advances.

On the east bank of the Dnipro, a massive explosion early on Sunday shook windows and caused plaster to rain down from ceilings in the Russia-controlled city of Melitopol, according to the city's exiled Ukrainian mayor, Ivan Fedorov.

Mr. Fedorov said the explosion had destroyed "one of the largest enemy military bases," although the claim could not be verified. The base, he said, had been set up on the grounds of a factory complex.

Melitopol is a center of activity for Ukrainian saboteurs, known as [partisans](#). It was not immediately clear whether the explosion was the result of a partisan attack or a long-range strike from Ukraine-controlled territory on the other side of the front line.

Russian state news agencies said Ukraine had fired from the High Mobility Rocket Artillery System, [a precision rocket system](#) provided to Ukraine by several NATO countries and used to hit targets far behind Russia's front lines. RIA Novosti said the strike had hit an abandoned factory, and there were no casualties. These claims could also not be verified.

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HEADLINE	08/28 UK: Ukraine refugees in homeless disaster
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/28/50000-ukrainian-refugees-in-uk-facing-homelessness-disaster-next-year-homes-for-ukraine">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/28/50000-ukrainian-refugees-in-uk-facing-homelessness-disaster-next-year-homes-for-ukraine</a>

A “shocking” 50,000 Ukrainian refugees in the UK could be made homeless next year, the government has been warned, but ministers are refusing to offer a fresh package of support to offset the impending crisis.

As the cost of living crisis bites and with no end in sight to the war with Russia, fears are mounting that the government’s [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#) will unravel next month when refugees’ initial six-month placements with hosts end without alternative accommodation in place.

Although Boris Johnson has framed the UK’s response to Russia’s invasion as a principled triumph, a number of organisations warn that a key response of his government to the conflict’s refugee crisis could prompt a “disastrous rise in homelessness”.

A total of 83,900 refugees have arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme since it began in March. [Refugees](#) were matched with sponsors who agreed to house them for six months and were paid £350 a month.

Not all matches have been successful. [Government data reveals](#) that since the war began in February, 1,335 Ukrainian households – including 945 families with children – have registered as homeless.

That figure is set to soar from next month. Analysis by children’s charity Barnardo’s, Labour and the Liberal Democrats say that, based on feedback from refugee sponsors, between 15,000 and 21,000 Ukrainians could be homeless by the winter, rising to more than 50,000 by the middle of next year.

One group, Refugees at Home, said the figure could be even higher because of a combination of pressures, including energy bills, soaring inflation and climbing interest rates.

Shadow levelling up secretary [Lisa Nandy](#) said: “These shocking numbers reveal the scale of the crisis about to hit refugee families who came to Britain under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, fleeing Putin’s war.”

When levelling up secretary [Michael Gove unveiled the scheme in March](#), Nandy asked in parliament what plans were in place for when sponsorships broke down, but she did not receive an answer. When the government was asked by the *Observer* on Saturday for the projected rates of homelessness among Ukrainian refugees, it declined to offer a figure.

James Jamieson, chairman of the Local Government Association, which represents more than 330 councils in England, warned that even if Ukrainians could find a new host in the event the original sponsorship did not work out, grave issues lay ahead.

“There is a significant risk that – even if rematching is available – many Ukrainian families may need to present as homeless because of a lack of sponsors or other options,” he said.

Last week, refugees minister Lord Harrington said monthly payments to UK hosts [should double after six months](#) to £700 a month to offset cost of living concerns. But Harrington has no authority to implement the rise, and so far the Treasury has refused. The government is now asking existing hosts to allow Ukrainians to stay for longer than six months, and [is appealing for new sponsors](#).

For many, the six-month period will expire in mid-September, with a significant proportion of hosts saying that without extra government help they will have to pull out. Several are warning that attracting new hosts will be considerably harder.

Stanislav Beneš of charity [Opora](#), which has helped about 8,000 Ukrainians into the UK, said: “The initial wave of sponsors included people who did not quite understand the implications and consequences of this sort of responsibility.”

Although the government said on Saturday that it was “reviewing” the level of support for the scheme, no fresh or improved help is yet on offer.

London mayor Sadiq Khan said: “It’s vital that the government steps forward to offer more support. Ukrainian families have come to our country seeking help and stability and the government needs to act now to ensure that hosts have the financial assistance and support in place to enable them to continue, and prevent a disastrous rise in homelessness.”

Kitty Hamilton of Vigil for Visas said increased support should be offered for three years – the length of visas given to Ukrainian refugees.

“The government’s commitment was for three years, not six months, so there needs to be a longer-term gameplan that doesn’t squander the goodwill of so many. The scheme was offered for an initial six months – the implication was to give the government a chance to make more substantial plans and for the invasion to end. But nothing has happened.”

Hamilton belongs to a group of sponsors in Crouch End, London, which manages 400 hosts and is so concerned at the number who might walk away from the scheme after six months that it is meeting with its local MP this week to discuss the issue.

Nandy added: “British households across the country have stepped up, while their government has gone into hiding. No more delays, no more sticking plasters – we need a proper plan to house and support refugees.”

Robina Qureshi, chief executive of Positive Action in Housing, said she was worried about “impending homelessness on a mass scale” when the first six-month period ends.

A government spokesperson said: “Councils have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their head. We’ve provided them with £10,500 per person to cover costs, with access to a rematching service to find a new sponsor in the rare case of a sponsorship breakdown. We have already acted to make sure the £350 thank-you payments are exempt from tax, and continue to monitor and review the support provided.”

They added that they were working closely with councils to ensure Ukrainians have access to suitable housing if they decide to move on.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Ukraine braces for cold winter; uncertainty</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/28/ukraine-braces-for-cold-winter-amid-uncertainty-over-power-supplies">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/28/ukraine-braces-for-cold-winter-amid-uncertainty-over-power-supplies</a>
GIST	<p>Ukrainians are likely to experience the coldest winter in decades, its gas chief has said, as the thermostats on its Soviet-era centralised heating systems are set to be switched on later and turned down.</p> <p>Yurii Vitrenko, the head of the state gas company Naftogaz, said indoor temperatures would be set at between 17 and 18C, about four degrees lower than normal, and he advised people to stock up on blankets and warm clothes for when outdoor temperatures fall to and beyond the -10C winter average.</p> <p>“Heating season”, the period when the central heating is on, will come later and end earlier, said Vitrenko.</p> <p>The target depends on Ukraine’s international allies giving it the necessary funds to import 4bn cubic metres-worth of gas, as well as no wildcards playing out – such as Russia destroying gas infrastructure or further decreasing its gas supplies to Europe.</p> <p>“Without the [western] financial support we will lack gas and it will mean we’ll have really high risks for the power system [going] down,” Vitrenko said. He described how Naftogaz backed up some of Ukraine’s</p>

power companies with gas in March when coal supplies were halted by the war. “[Otherwise] there would have been no electricity,” he said.

“[Without the gas imports], there will be blackouts in big parts of Ukraine,” Vitrenko said. “In terms of heating, if we don’t have this 2bn cbm of gas, then it will mean some of the households will not get enough heating ... so it will be really too cold.”

Ukraine produces about 60% of the gas it needs domestically and imports the rest from its European Union neighbours at market prices. The country stopped buying gas from Russia directly in 2014, though it still consumes much of the same Russian gas that comes via pipelines through Ukraine from EU suppliers.

This roundabout system was devised to stop Russia from using gas as a tool to influence Ukraine. Gas contracts between Russia and Ukraine were a longstanding source of grand corruption, with Ukrainian politicians and oligarchs allowing Russia to hold sway in the country’s internal affairs in exchange for cheap gas.

Ukraine needs about \$10bn to import gas. Vitrenko said he thought its allies understood the need but he could not be confident Ukraine would get the funds because “it’s very difficult to be confident during a war”.

The current calculus could change, however, if, for instance, Russia targets any of Ukraine’s critical gas infrastructure, power plants or gas production facilities. About 50% of Ukraine’s gas fields are in the Kharkiv region, four miles from the frontlines. If it or Ukraine’s storage facilities were to be damaged, Ukraine would need to import more gas.

Another much talked-about risk is if Russia decides to further decrease gas supplies to the EU, making the cost of gas even more expensive. Russia cut supplies to the EU earlier this year, dramatically raising gas and electricity prices in some countries, including the UK.

“The world is experiencing the first truly global energy crisis in history,” Fatih Birol, the executive director of the International Energy Agency, wrote last month. “The situation is especially perilous in Europe, which is at the epicentre of the energy market turmoil.”

Ukraine’s state gas company defaulted on creditors in July, saying the war had left many of its customers unable to pay their bills. Normally, said Vitrenko, Ukraine’s state gas company would buy gas from the EU and sell it on for a profit. But given soaring prices and the endemic unemployment caused by the war, Ukraine will need to subsidise energy prices this year.

Russia has targeted critical energy infrastructure since February, including oil refineries and power stations. In the event that it targets gas infrastructure or gas production facilities, Ukraine is preparing emergency kits that could service up to 200,000 people, including mobile boilers, mobile heating units and diesel power generators.

“If a big city like Kyiv or Kharkiv [is cut off], of course, [the kits] won’t be enough, but in some small towns these emergency kits will make a difference,” Vitrenko said. “It all depends on the scale of the damage.”

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HEADLINE	08/28 Day 186 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/28/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-186-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/28/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-186-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Concern about the potential for a radiation leak at Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant is persisting.</b> Ukraine’s state energy operator has <a href="#">warned there are “risks of hydrogen leakage and sputtering of radioactive substances”</a> at the Russian-occupied plant. Authorities were <a href="#">distributing iodine tablets to residents who live near the plant</a> in case of radiation exposure.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Russia and Ukraine traded fresh accusations of each other shelling the area around the nuclear plant</b>, Europe's largest, on Saturday. <a href="#">Moscow's troops have "repeatedly shelled" the site</a> of the plant over the past day, the Ukrainian state nuclear company, Energoatom, said. Russia's defence ministry has claimed Ukraine's troops "shelled the territory of the station three times" in the past day.</li> <li>• <b>The UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is trying to negotiate access to the plant for an urgent inspection mission</b> "to help stabilise the nuclear safety and security situation there". Energoatom head Petro Kotin told the Guardian a visit could come before the end of the month, but Ukrainian energy minister Lana Zerkal told a local radio station she was not convinced Russia was negotiating in good faith.</li> <li>• <b>Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy has issued a statement marking Ukraine's Aviation Day</b>, in which he pledged that Kyiv's troops would "destroy the occupiers' potential step by step". The Ukrainian president <a href="#">vowed that the Russian "invaders will die like dew on the sun"</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Russia has probably increased the intensity of its attacks in the Donetsk area of eastern Ukraine's Donbas region</b> over the past five days, according to British intelligence. Pro-Russia separatists have most likely made progress towards the centre of Pisky village, near Donetsk airport, but Russian forces overall have secured few territorial gains, <a href="#">the latest report from the UK Ministry of Defence says</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Russia has blocked an agreement at the UN aimed at bolstering the nuclear non-proliferation treaty</b>. The failure to agree to a joint statement, <a href="#">due to Moscow's objection to a clause about control over the Zaporizhzhia plant</a>, is the latest blow to hopes of maintaining an arms control regime and keeping a lid on a rekindled arms race.</li> <li>• <b>Ukrainian sailors will be allowed to leave the country for work</b>, Ukraine's cabinet of ministers has said. The prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, <a href="#">said men of draft age employed as crew members would be allowed to leave the country</a> so long as they had permission from their local conscription offices to cross the border.</li> <li>• <b>Britain's defence ministry has said it is giving six underwater drones to Ukraine to help clear its coastline of mines and make grain shipments safer</b>. In addition, dozens of Ukrainian navy personnel will be taught to use the drones over the coming months, <a href="#">the ministry said</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Kazakhstan, a neighbour and ally of Russia, has suspended all arms exports for a year</b>, its government said, amid the conflict in <a href="#">Ukraine</a> and western sanctions against Moscow.</li> <li>• <b>Poland and the Czech Republic have agreed to protect the airspace of their Nato ally Slovakia</b>, as it upgrades its air force from legacy Soviet-made MiG-29 fighters to a new batch of F-16 jets from the US.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Rival Chechen fighters Ukraine battlefield</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/rival-chechen-fighters-take-war-to-battlefields-of/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/rival-chechen-fighters-take-war-to-battlefields-of/</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Kneeling in a patch of yellow wildflowers, a Chechen soldier carefully attaches an explosive device to the bottom of a small drone. Seconds later, it is released. It explodes next to two old storefront mannequins set up 200 meters (yards) away, one with a Russian-style military hat on its head.</p> <p>After this and other training outside the Ukrainian capital, the Chechen soldiers, in assorted camouflage footwear and protective gear, will be heading to the front lines in Ukraine, vowing to continue the fight against Russia that raged for years in their North Caucasus homeland.</p> <p>Fighters from Chechnya, the war-scarred republic in southern Russia, are participating on both sides of the conflict in Ukraine.</p> <p>Pro-Kyiv volunteers are loyal to Dzhokhar Dudayev, the late Chechen leader who headed the republic's drive for independence from Russia. They form the "Dudayev Battalion" and are the sworn enemies of Chechen forces who back Russian President Vladimir Putin and joined Russia in the months-long siege of Ukraine's key port of Mariupol and other flashpoints in eastern and southern Ukraine.</p>

One group of new Chechen arrivals, many of whom live in Western Europe, was being trained at a makeshift firing range outside Kyiv before heading east. At a training session Saturday, the new recruits – all Muslim men – shouted “Allahu akbar!” (“God is great!”), holding their rifles in the air before being handed military ID cards that are issued to volunteers.

Ukrainian officials say the Chechen battalion currently numbers several hundred who fight alongside the country’s military but are not formally under the national command.

Instructors teach the new battalion members combat basics, including how to use a weapon, assume a firing position and how to work in teams. Trainers include veterans of wars in Chechnya that ended in 2009, some joining up in Ukraine after the fighting against Russia-backed separatists started in Ukraine in 2014.

Tor, a volunteer who asked only to be identified by his battlefield nickname, said he sees no difference between the two conflicts.

“People have to understand we don’t have a choice,” he said speaking in English and with his face covered. “If they (Russian forces) win this war, they will continue. They never stop. I don’t know. The Baltic countries will be next, or Georgia or Kazakhstan. Putin openly, absolutely, says he wants to rebuild the Soviet empire.”

Russia launched two wars to prevent Chechnya, a mostly Muslim province, from gaining independence after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. The first conflict erupted in 1994.

The second Chechen war began in 1999 and culminated in a siege by Russian troops of Grozny, the Chechen capital, which was devastated by heavy Russian bombardment. After years of battling an insurgency, Russian officials declared the conflict in Chechnya over in 2017.

Muslim Madiev, a veteran fighter of the Chechen conflicts, identified himself as an adviser to the volunteer battalion in Ukraine. He joined the soldiers Saturday in shooting practice, taking aim at a plastic bottle held up on a stick. Bullet casings flew from his automatic rifle onto a field already littered with bullets, shotgun cartridges and cardboard target sheets.

“We’re going to win this war. The whole world is already standing up for us,” he says, speaking in Russian.

“We were the only ones who fought for ourselves (in Chechnya). No one stood with us. But now the whole world is behind Ukraine. We must win, we must win,” he declared.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Poland, Czechia to protect Slovak airspace</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/poles-czechs-vow-to-protect-slovak-airspace-as-mig/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/poles-czechs-vow-to-protect-slovak-airspace-as-mig/</a>
GIST	<p>MALACKY, Slovakia (AP) — Poland and Czechia signed an agreement Saturday to protect Slovak airspace as Slovakia gives up its old Soviet-made MiG-29 jets.</p> <p>The vow of protection by NATO allies comes as Russia’s war against Ukraine enters its seventh month. It is to last until Slovakia receives new F-16s from the United States, something expected to happen in 2024.</p> <p>Under the agreement, Poland and Czechia are providing the necessary forces to quickly react in case of violations of Slovakia’s airspace. Slovakia has a border with Ukraine, which Russia invaded in February.</p> <p>Commanders 53-man roster projection: Who makes it after preseason concludes with loss to Ravens? The agreement was signed at a Slovak airbase by defense ministers Jana Cernochova of Czechia, Mariusz Blaszczak of Poland and Jaroslav Nad of Slovakia.</p>



	<p>“In the immediate proximity of our region where we live came a war, and all of us who are standing here today either have experience with fascism or communism, and we really value the freedom that we gained after 1989,” Cernochova said at a news conference alongside her Slovak and Polish counterparts.</p> <p>Blaszczak said under the agreement, a pair of Polish F-16 fighter jets would begin patrolling Slovakia’s air space starting Sept. 1. He called the effort a way for the neighbors to “deter a possible aggressor.”</p> <p>Slovakia has a fleet of 11 MiG-29 jets, and last month Nad said Slovakia may consider donating them to Ukraine under certain conditions.</p> <p>Asked by a reporter Saturday about whether the jets might go to Ukraine, Nad said Slovakia was in talks with Ukraine and its European Union allies about how best to help. But he said he could not say what that help might look like yet.</p> <p>Since the start of the Russian invasion on Feb. 24, Ukraine has urged Western allies to provide it with warplanes to challenge Russia’s air superiority.</p> <p>Poland, Czechia and Slovakia belong to a region that was under Moscow’s control during the decades of the Cold War. Many people here worry that if Russia isn’t stopped in Ukraine, Moscow’s renewed imperial ambitions could target them too.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Deadly clashes shake Libya’s capital</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/deadly-clashes-shake-libyas-capital-killing-23-peo/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/deadly-clashes-shake-libyas-capital-killing-23-peo/</a>
GIST	<p>CAIRO (AP) — Deadly clashes broke out Saturday in Libya’s capital between militias backed by its two rival administrations, portending a return to violence amid a long political stalemate.</p> <p>At least 23 people were killed and 140 more wounded, the Health Ministry said. It added that 64 families were evacuated from areas around the fighting.</p> <p>The escalation threatens to shatter the relative calm Libya has enjoyed for most of the past two years. The oil-rich nation plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime autocrat Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.</p> <p>Among the fatalities was Mustafa Baraka, a comedian known for his social media videos mocking militias and corruption. Baraka died after he was shot in his chest, said Malek Merset, an emergency services spokesman.</p> <p>Merset said emergency services were still trying to evacuate wounded and civilians trapped in the fighting that erupted overnight and continued into Saturday evening.</p> <p>The Health Ministry said in a statement hospitals and medical centers in the capital were shelled, and ambulance teams were barred from evacuating civilians, in acts that “amount to war crimes.”</p> <p>The municipal council of Tripoli blamed the ruling political class for the deteriorating situation in the capital, and urged the international community to “protect civilians in Libya.”</p> <p>The violence caused widespread panic among Tripoli residents. Footage circulated online showed houses, government facilities, and vehicles apparently damaged from the fighting. Other footage showed militia forces deploying and heavy fire being exchanged across the night sky.</p> <p>The U.N. mission in Libya said the fighting involved “indiscriminate medium and heavy shelling in civilian-populated neighborhoods” of Tripoli.</p>

	<p>The mission called for an immediate cease-fire, and for all parties in Libya to “refrain from using any form of hate speech and incitement to violence.”</p> <p>The clashes pitted the Tripoli Revolutionaries’ Brigade militia, led by Haitham Tajouri, against another militia allied with Abdel-Ghani al-Kikli, an infamous warlord known as “Gheniwa,” according to local media. Later on Saturday, more militias joined the fighting which spread in different areas in the capital.</p> <p>Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah’s government, which is based in Tripoli, claimed the clashes broke out when one militia fired at another.</p> <p>The fighting, however, is highly likely part of ongoing power struggle between Dbeibah and his rival Prime Minister Fathy Bashagha who is operating from the coast city of Sirte.</p> <p>Both Dbeibah and Bashagha are backed by militias, and the latter was mobilizing in recent weeks to try to enter Tripoli to dislodge his rival.</p> <p>An attempt in May by Bashagha to install his government in Tripoli triggered clashes that ended with his withdrawal from the capital.</p> <p>U.S. Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland urged for de-escalation “before things get worse” and for Libyan parties to agree on an early date for elections.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/26 Ethiopia airstrike hits Tigray kindergarten</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/world/africa/ethiopian-tigray-airstrike-kindergarten.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/world/africa/ethiopian-tigray-airstrike-kindergarten.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>NAIROBI, Kenya — An Ethiopian government airstrike ripped through a kindergarten in the northern Tigray region on Friday, killing at least seven people including several children, medics said, as the hunger-stricken region plunged into a new round of fighting.</p> <p>The attack came two days after fighting erupted on the southeastern border of Tigray, shattering a five-month truce between the government and rebels intended to allow supplies into a region that has been under a punishing government-imposed siege for most of the past year.</p> <p>Dire food shortages have left nearly half of Tigray’s six million people on the verge of starvation, according to the United Nations, and supplies of medicine, fuel and cash are disastrously low.</p> <p>Fears that the latest fighting, which each side accused the other of starting, would quickly spread across Tigray grew on Friday after the airstrike demolished a kindergarten in the regional capital, Mekelle, just after midday.</p> <p>Footage broadcast on a local TV station showed rescuers picking through the rainbow-colored remains of the kindergarten, searching for survivors. In one clip, the body of a small boy with a gaping chest wound was loaded into the back of a truck. Ambulances rushed to the city’s main hospital, Ayder Referral.</p> <p>It was unclear if the kindergarten was open when the bomb struck; by some accounts, those hit by the blast were in a playground outside the building.</p> <p>Dr. Fasika Amdeslasie, a surgeon who treated the wounded, said that four bodies had been brought to Ayder, and three others to the smaller Mekelle Hospital. “The jet came, we heard a blast, and then the victims started pouring in,” he said.</p> <p>The local Tigray television station also reported seven dead. The head of the Ayder hospital, Kibrom Gebreselassie, said in a tweet that his hospital had received four dead and nine wounded.</p>

Dr. Fasika supplied photos from the emergency ward that included the boy with the chest wound, who he said was 10 years old. He identified the kindergarten as the [RES Kids Paradise](#), a place he knew because his own children once attended it, he said.

In a statement released soon after the blast, the Ethiopian government vowed to “take action” against the Tigray rebels and urged civilians to stay away from military sites.

As graphic images of wounded children circulated on social media, the government issued a second statement to news agencies denying it had struck a residential neighborhood. Its Air Force was “targeting only military sites,” it said, accusing the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, which controls much of Tigray, of “dumping fake body bags in civilian areas.”

The escalating violence is a major blow to international efforts to mediate the conflict, which erupted in November 2020 when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered a military operation in Tigray.

Since then, the conflict has been accompanied by accounts of widespread atrocities and civilian suffering, especially in Tigray, where millions have little to eat. The situation could get even worse in the coming weeks, with predictions from the United Nations weather agency on Friday that a devastating drought is about to stretch into a fifth consecutive failed rainy season.

In Tigray, a very public dispute in recent days between the rebels and the United Nations has added to the sense of crisis.

On Thursday the head of the U.N.’s World Food Program, David Beasley, accused the rebels of stealing 570,000 liters of fuel from its compound in Mekelle that, he said, was needed to distribute relief aid.

“Millions will starve if we do not have fuel to deliver food,” Mr. Beasley wrote in a tweet. “This is OUTRAGEOUS and DISGRACEFUL. We demand return of this fuel NOW.”

The Tigrayan authorities shot back with a statement that they had loaned 600,000 liters of fuel to the World Food Program earlier this year, and had seized what was owed to them. “The government of Tigray has not ‘stolen’ any fuel tankers,” it said in response to Mr. Beasley. “His regrettably unfortunate choice of words has far-reaching ramifications for humanitarian operations across Tigray.”

William Davison, an analyst with the International Crisis Group, said that regardless of whether fuel was owed or not, the dispute had jeopardized critical relief supplies. He called on all sides to “prioritize desperately needed assistance to civilians rather than their military and political goals.”

As the war ramped up again in Tigray, ending five months of uneasy calm, such appeals appeared to be falling on deaf ears.

Analysts believe that any escalation of fighting will be concentrated in western Tigray, which pro-government militias seized in the early weeks of the war in 2020. The Tigrayans say they want that territory returned to them as a precondition for any talks.

Western allies are pressuring the belligerents to pull back, hoping to create enough space for the African Union mediator, the former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, to bring both sides to the table. Senator Jim Risch of Idaho, the senior Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, said that American engagement “must include legislative options,” a reference to possible additional sanctions.

But some analysts said that calls for a return to talks only highlighted the abject failure of Mr. Obasanjo’s faltering peace effort. “That process is now dead,” Alex de Waal, executive director of the World Peace Foundation at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, wrote in an article on Friday. “Appeals for restraint will fall on deaf ears.”

	<p>In Mekelle, the resumption of hostilities was met with a shrug by a population that has already been numbed by almost two years of conflict, including a crippling siege.</p> <p>“We have already touched the bottom of the pit,” Dr. Fasika said. Even when the now-collapsed truce was in operation, he said, the Ayder hospital only received “a trickle” of lifesaving medicines.</p> <p>“The hospital is barely functional,” he said. “We see patients dying in our hands because of a lack of IV fluids, a lack of antibiotics, a lack of oxygen, and a lack of lights because we have no petrol for the generator.”</p> <p>“Everyone is already desperate,” he added. “So the start of war doesn’t change anything.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 China’s record drought feeds its coal habit</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/business/economy/china-drought-economy-climate.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/business/economy/china-drought-economy-climate.html</a>
GIST	<p>HONG KONG — Car assembly plants and electronics factories in southwestern China have closed for lack of power. Owners of electric cars are waiting overnight at charging stations to recharge their vehicles. Rivers are so low there that ships can no longer carry supplies.</p> <p>A record-setting drought and an 11-week heat wave are causing broad disruption in a region that depends on dams for more than three-quarters of its electricity generation. The factory shutdowns and logistical delays are hindering China’s efforts to revive its economy as the country’s leader, Xi Jinping, prepares to claim a third term in power this autumn.</p> <p>The ruling Communist Party is already struggling to reverse a slowdown in China, the world’s second largest economy, caused by the country’s strict Covid lockdowns and a slumping real estate market. Young people are finding it hard to get jobs, while uncertainty over the economic outlook is compelling residents to save instead of spend, and to hold off on buying new homes.</p> <p>Now, the extreme heat is adding to frustration by snarling power supplies, threatening crops and setting off wildfires. Reduced electricity from hydroelectric dams has prompted China to burn more coal, a large contributor to air pollution and to greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming.</p> <p>Many cities around the country have been forced to impose rolling blackouts or limit energy use. In Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, several neighborhoods went without electricity for more than 10 hours a day.</p> <p>Vera Wang, a Chengdu resident, said that just to charge her electric car, her boyfriend waited in a long line overnight at a charging station that was only partly operating. It was 4 a.m. by the time he reached the front of the line.</p> <p>“The line was so long that it extended from the underground parking lot to the road outside,” she said.</p> <p>The heat wave has scorched China for more than two months, stretching from Sichuan in the southwest to the country’s eastern coast and sending the mercury above 104 degrees on many days. In Chongqing, a sprawling metropolis in the southwest with around 20 million people, the temperature soared to 113 degrees last week, the first time such a high reading had been recorded in a Chinese city outside the western desert region of Xinjiang.</p> <p>The searing heat set off wildfires in the mountains and forests on Chongqing’s outskirts, where thousands of firefighters and volunteers have worked to put out blazes. Residents said the air smelled of acrid smoke.</p> <p>The drought has dried up dozens of rivers and reservoirs in the region and cut Sichuan’s hydropower generation capacity by half, hurting industrial production. Volkswagen closed its 6,000-employee factory</p>

in Chengdu for the past week and a half, and Toyota temporarily suspended operations at its assembly plant.

Foxconn, the giant Taiwanese electronics manufacturer, and CATL, the world's largest maker of electric car batteries, have both curtailed production at factories in the vicinity.

In Ezhou, a city in central China near Wuhan, the Yangtze River is now at its lowest level for this time of year since record-keeping began there in 1865. People's Daily, the main newspaper of the Communist Party, reported on Aug. 19 that the Yangtze River had fallen to the same average level it normally reaches at the end of the winter dry season.

But the disruptions from the hydropower shortfall are being felt far from the southwest, including in China's eastern cities, which are buyers of hydropower. Some factories and commercial buildings in cities like Hangzhou and Shanghai are rationing electricity.

The falling water levels in major rivers that serve the region's main transport hubs have also led to delays elsewhere in the supply chain. The Yangtze River has receded so much that many oceangoing ships can no longer reach upstream ports. The upper Yangtze basin normally gets half its entire annual rainfall just in July and August, so the failure of this year's rains may mean a long wait for more water.

That is forcing China to divert large numbers of trucks to carry their cargo. A single ship can require 500 or more trucks to move its cargo.

"We're losing a few months of really efficient shipping," said Even Rogers Pay, a food and agriculture analyst at Trivium, a Beijing consulting firm.

The heat wave and drought are also starting to drive food prices higher in China, especially for fruit and vegetables. Farmers' fields and orchards are wilting. Sichuan is a leading grower in China of apples, plums and other fruit, and fruit trees that die could take five years to replace. The price of bok choy, a popular cabbage, has nearly doubled in Wuhan this month.

"That's going to create more economic pain, which is the last thing the leadership wants to see," Ms. Pay said.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and four other departments issued an emergency notice warning on Tuesday that the drought posed a "severe threat" to China's autumn harvest. China's cabinet on Wednesday approved \$1.5 billion for disaster relief and assistance to rice farmers and another \$1.5 billion for overall farm subsidies.

The government has urged local officials to seek out more water sources and allocate more electricity to support farmers and promote the planting of leafy vegetables, which are highly perishable, in big cities. Fire trucks have been used to spray water on fields and deliver water to pig farms.

The extreme weather sweeping across China also has potential implications for the world's efforts to halt climate change. Beijing has sought to offset at least part of the lost hydropower from the drought by ramping up the use of coal-fired power plants. China's domestic mining of coal has been at or near record levels, and customs data shows that its imports of coal from Russia reached a new high last month.

But China's reliance on the fossil fuel raises questions about its commitment to slowing the growth of its carbon emissions.

"In the short term in China, the very, very painful realization is that only coal can serve as the base" for the electricity supply, said Ma Jun, the director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, a Beijing environmental group. Sichuan Province has lured energy-intensive industries like chemical manufacturing for many years with extremely low electricity prices, he said, and some of these industries have squandered power through inefficiency.

	<p>The government has sought to mitigate the effects of global warming on its economy. The National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic planning ministry, set up a working group last winter to analyze the effects of climate change on water-related industries like hydroelectric dams.</p> <p>While such efforts may help China preserve the viability of renewable energy programs, they may not prompt China to limit the burning of coal this year as a quick fix, said Ed Cunningham, the director of the Asia Energy and Sustainability Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School.</p> <p>"They're much more comfortable with coal," Mr. Cunningham said, "and the reality is that when there's a shortage of hydro, they use coal."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Ukraine women: new roles, new dangers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/27/world/europe/ukraine-war-women.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/27/world/europe/ukraine-war-women.html</a>
GIST	<p>CHERNIHIV, Ukraine — The road to the training site was lined with crumbling homes and damaged buildings, a reminder of how <a href="#">war had consumed</a> the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv just months ago.</p> <p>At the head of the class was a woman named Hanna, along with a board showing images of unexploded munitions and landmines. She explained to the class the risks of minefields and how they are marked. One woman attending the day's training asked if it was safe to take her 3-year-old son to a local park.</p> <p>"Don't walk in the woodland — it's best not to walk there," said Hanna, 34, advising her to stay on undisturbed paved areas.</p> <p>Hanna, who asked that her surname not be used because of fears for her safety, is among a growing number of Ukrainian women who have been trained in demining, which until just a few years ago was on <a href="#">a list of hundreds of jobs</a> women in the country were barred from holding.</p> <p>Women have become an omnipresent force in Ukraine's war <a href="#">six months in</a> as they confront long-held stereotypes about their role in the country's post-Soviet society.</p> <p>They are increasingly joining the military, including in combat positions, and spearheading volunteer and fund-raising efforts. And with men still making up a majority of combatants, women are taking on extra roles in civilian life, running businesses in addition to looking after their families.</p> <p>Originally from Mariupol, Hanna joined a Swiss demining foundation there two years ago, and after <a href="#">Russia invaded Ukraine</a> in February, she fled that southern port city and headed north.</p> <p>Now, she is working in cities like Chernihiv, from which the Russian occupiers <a href="#">have since retreated</a>, to make war-ravaged cities and towns safe from landmines.</p> <p>"The perception of women, in general, has been very paternalistic," said Anna Kvit, a Ukrainian sociologist who specializes in gender studies. "With this war that escalated in 2022, the agency of women not only increased, but it also became more visible."</p> <p>That shift has been underway for some time, Ms. Kvit said, with women increasingly taking on new roles after the 2014 conflict in eastern Ukraine, accelerating changes in the defense and security sectors that filtered out broadly across society. Women had been barred from combat roles, but they were still taking part in the fighting, although without the same status, benefits or recognition as men.</p> <p>"In Ukrainian society, the resistance was, and probably still is, that the army and war are not a place for women," Ms. Kvit said.</p>



Legislation adopted in 2018 gave Ukrainian women the same legal status as men in the armed forces, and the shift drove a broader push for gender-inclusive labor reforms.

The new laws ended bans on women holding any of 450 occupations in Ukraine, a holdover from the Soviet era, when certain work was considered damaging to reproductive health. In addition to demining roles, that list had included long-haul trucking, welding, firefighting and many security and defense jobs.

Hanna Maliar, Ukraine's deputy defense minister, said that more than 50,000 women were now in the country's armed forces, and that the number had risen significantly since the war began.

Despite this, the key decision makers and a majority of the combatants are men, often obscuring the increasingly vital role of women in the conflict, said Jenny Mathers, an expert in security, Russia and gender and conflict at Aberystwyth University in Britain.

"One of the many persistent truths is that women do an awful lot of the unacknowledged but really crucial work," Dr. Mathers said. "War wouldn't happen without them, and all the things that are going to sustain societies that are in conflict — many of them are done by women."

Ukrainian women have become the backbone of wide-scale logistics efforts, Dr. Mathers noted, and are organizing to make camouflage netting for troops, cooking for the millions of internally displaced people and raising money to support soldiers.

With men ages 18 to 60 prohibited from leaving the country so they can fight Russia, women are volunteering to drive transport cars from other countries in Europe for use by Ukraine's military.

"When the war started, I was just thinking, 'How can I be helpful?'" said Yevheniia Ustinova, 39, who is part of one of the countless groups that drive these transport cars to Ukraine.

During a brief stop at a cafe in Lviv, in western Ukraine, she described a two-day round-trip journey into Poland from her home in Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, to pick up a truck and then return to Ukraine.

"Everyone is doing what he or she can do," she said.

The female drivers have been well received, said Maria Stetsiuk, 35, who was passing through Lviv last month while driving east, where she planned to drop a truck off with friends in the military. But occasionally there are skeptics, like the police officer who stopped her on the way into Dnipro recently and asked her why she was driving and why she did not have a husband.

"I never thought I'd be doing something like this," Ms. Stetsiuk said. "But nowadays everyone is doing what he or she can."

These informal networks will be essential if peace returns, and they could play a vital role in rebuilding Ukraine, said Andrea Ellner, an expert in gender and war at King's College London.

But she warned that stereotypes about women could "stand in the way" of female progress in a postwar Ukraine and obscure "how important they are."

As the war has upended their lives, some Ukrainian women said they were confronting their own stereotypes about gender roles.

Yulia Maleks, 36, bought a small farm outside Lviv with her husband four years ago and said she never imagined she would be trying to keep it afloat alone. Her husband had tried to spare her from doing the hard labor, she said, while she focused on building a small dairy business.

But then the war began, and he volunteered for a local defense unit, leaving Ms. Maleks to work the farm alone.

“I’ve learned to do many things myself,” she said, like stocking the wooden stove they use to heat the house and trimming the animals’ hooves. Each morning, she rises at dawn to feed her goats and sheep, lugging feed and water buckets across the farm.

“My husband used to not let me carry the heavy stuff,” Ms. Maleks explained.

While the war has challenged perceptions about gender and broadened some opportunities for women, it has also had a disproportionate, brutal effect on their lives. Though they tend not to die in combat, they are among those most affected by displacement, and an analysis by U.N. Women and CARE International said the war had increased their care burden significantly and worsened gender inequalities, something that worries experts.

Yuliia Serdiuk, 31, was severely injured in shelling weeks ago in her hometown, Orikhiv, in Ukraine’s southeastern Zaporizhzhia region, when the once sleepy town found itself on the front line as Ukrainian forces tried to push back Russian troops. On May 8, her son had asked her to hold his hand as he rode his skateboard down a hill.

“Suddenly, there was an explosion,” she said. “We started running.” She shielded her son with her body. Fragments hit her rib and liver, and severed much of her spinal column. She can no longer walk and was evacuated by train to a hospital in Lviv, where she is undergoing intensive rehabilitation.

There, on a recent afternoon, a doctor helped her into a wheelchair and took her to physical therapy. Bruises are still visible, peeking out from under her T-shirt.

Ms. Serdiuk wants to return home, even though her town has been devastated. Her son’s school is gone, the downtown demolished. She is hoping to be transferred outside Ukraine for more advanced care.

Her mother, Nataliia Budovska, 51, has been with her daughter throughout her recovery and said it was difficult to see her suffering.

“It is like cutting my heart into pieces,” she said. “For people who don’t have war at their doorstep, it may seem like this is made up. But it’s true — this is reality.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 US warships sail Taiwan Strait; defies China</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/world/asia/us-warships-taiwan-china.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/world/asia/us-warships-taiwan-china.html</a>
GIST	<p>HONG KONG — The U.S. Navy said that two of its warships were sailing through the Taiwan Strait on Sunday, the first such passage by American ships since China began large-scale military exercises in response to <a href="#">a visit to Taiwan by Speaker Nancy Pelosi early this month</a>.</p> <p>The guided-missile cruisers Antietam and Chancellorsville were conducting what the Navy’s Seventh Fleet called “a routine Taiwan Strait transit.” American officials <a href="#">said this month that the Navy would continue to operate</a> around Taiwan, despite China’s claims to control the waterway.</p> <p>China has warned the United States against sailing warships in the Taiwan Strait and said that it would respond to what it considers threats to its sovereignty. The Chinese military said on Sunday in a statement that it had monitored the ships’ passage but did not indicate any additional response.</p> <p>“Eastern theater forces remain on high alert, ready to thwart any provocation,” it said.</p> <p>After Ms. Pelosi visited Taiwan on Aug. 2-3, China launched missiles into waters that are part of Japan’s exclusive economic zone and carried out 72 hours of live fire exercises around Taiwan that <a href="#">simulated a potential blockade</a> of the island. China considers self-governed Taiwan to be part of its territory, although the Communist Party has never controlled the island.</p>

Beijing has long sought to isolate Taiwan internationally and called Ms. Pelosi's visit, the first by a House speaker in 25 years, a breach of the status quo under which the United States does not maintain official ties with Taiwan. Her trip was [followed by visits](#) from three more groups of American officials and a delegation of Japanese lawmakers.

Analysts said that the extensive drills following Ms. Pelosi's visit to Taiwan meant China would probably continue to rely on military exercises in response to perceived provocations in the area.

"If the U.S. or Taiwan do something they don't like, they are likely to carry out similar naval and air activities — maybe not a missile firing, but naval and air exercises to make the point that you have done something to make China unhappy," said Phillip C. Saunders, director of the Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs at the Institute for National Strategic Studies in Washington. "That is what I see as the new normal going forward."

Chinese officials have called on the United States to halt military activities in the region and accused the Americans of exacerbating tensions.

"The U.S. side has done too much and gone too far in this region," Qin Gang, the Chinese ambassador to the United States, [said in mid-August](#).

"I do call on American colleagues to exercise restraint, not to do anything to escalate the tension," Mr. Qin added. "So if there's any move damaging China's territorial integrity and sovereignty, China will respond."

The U.S. Navy said that its ships did not sail through any territorial waters while transiting the Taiwan Strait and that the passage was meant to uphold the freedom to navigate the high seas.

"These ships transited through a corridor in the strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal state," the Seventh Fleet said in a written statement on Sunday. "The ship's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows."

Taiwan's military said that the two American warships had sailed from north to south through the strait and that their voyage appeared "normal."

"During their southward journey through the strait, the national army had grasped the relevant dynamics of the surrounding sea and airspace throughout the whole process, and the situation was normal," Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said in a statement.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Mideast efforts to squeeze rain from clouds</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/world/middleeast/cloud-seeding-mideast-water-emirates.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/world/middleeast/cloud-seeding-mideast-water-emirates.html</a>
GIST	<p>ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — Iranian officials have worried for years that other nations have been depriving them of one of their vital water sources. But it was not an upstream dam that they were worrying about, or an aquifer being bled dry.</p> <p>In 2018, amid a searing drought and rising temperatures, some senior officials concluded that someone was stealing their water from the clouds.</p> <p>"Both Israel and another country are working to make Iranian clouds not rain," said Brig. Gen. Gholan Reza Jalali, a senior official in the country's powerful Revolutionary Guards Corps in a 2018 speech.</p> <p>The unnamed country was the United Arab Emirates, which had begun an ambitious cloud-seeding program, injecting chemicals into clouds to try to force precipitation. Iran's suspicions are not surprising,</p>

given its tense relations with most Persian Gulf nations, but the real purpose of these efforts is not to steal water, but simply to make it rain on parched lands.

As the Middle East and North Africa dry up, countries in the region have embarked on a race to develop the chemicals and techniques that they hope will enable them to squeeze rain drops out of clouds that would otherwise float fruitlessly overhead.

With 12 of the 19 regional countries averaging less than 10 inches of rainfall a year, a decline of 20 percent over the past 30 years, their governments are desperate for any increment of fresh water, and cloud seeding is seen by many as a quick way to tackle the problem.

And as wealthy countries like the emirates pump hundreds of millions of dollars into the effort, other nations are joining the race, trying to ensure that they do not miss out on their fair share of rainfall before others drain the heavens dry — despite serious questions about whether the technique generates enough rainfall to be worth the effort and expense.

Morocco and Ethiopia have cloud-seeding programs, as does Iran. Saudi Arabia just started a large-scale program, and a half-dozen other Middle Eastern and North African countries are considering it.

China has the most ambitious program worldwide, with the aim of either stimulating rain or halting hail across half the country. It is trying to force clouds to rain over the Yangtze River, which is running dry in some spots.

While cloud seeding has been around for 75 years, experts say the science has yet to be proven. And they are especially dismissive of worries about one country draining clouds dry at the expense of others downwind.

The life span of a cloud, in particular the type of cumulus clouds most likely to produce rain, is rarely more than a couple of hours, atmospheric scientists say. Occasionally, clouds can last longer, but rarely long enough to reach another country, even in the Persian Gulf, where seven countries are jammed close together.

But several Middle Eastern countries have brushed aside the experts' doubts and are pushing ahead with plans to wring any moisture they can from otherwise stingy clouds.

Today, the unquestioned regional leader is the United Arab Emirates. As early as the 1990s, the country's ruling Al Nayhan family recognized that maintaining a plentiful supply of water would be as important as the nation's huge oil and gas reserves in sustaining its status as the financial and business capital of the Persian Gulf.

While there had been enough water to sustain the tiny country's population in 1960, when there were fewer than 100,000 people, by 2020 the population had ballooned to nearly 10 million. And the demand for water soared, as well. United Arab Emirates residents now use roughly 147 gallons per person a day, compared with the world average of 47 gallons, according to a 2021 research paper funded by the emirates.

Currently, that demand is being met by desalination plants. Each facility, however, costs \$1 billion or more to build and requires prodigious amounts of energy to run, especially when compared with cloud seeding, said Abdulla Al Mandous, the director of the National Center of Meteorology and Seismology in the emirates and the leader of its cloud-seeding program.

After 20 years of research and experimentation, the center runs its cloud-seeding program with near military protocols. Nine pilots rotate on standby, ready to bolt into the sky as soon as meteorologists focusing on the country's mountainous regions spot a promising weather formation — ideally, the types of clouds that can build to heights of as much as 40,000 feet.

They have to be ready on a moment's notice because promising clouds are not as common in the Middle East as in many other parts of the world.

"We are on 24-hour availability — we live within 30 to 40 minutes of the airport — and from arrival here, it takes us 25 minutes to be airborne," said Capt. Mark Newman, a South African senior cloud-seeding pilot. In the event of multiple, potentially rain-bearing clouds, the center will send more than one aircraft.

The United Arab Emirates uses two seeding substances: the traditional material made of silver iodide and a newly patented substance developed at Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi that uses nanotechnology that researchers there say is better adapted to the hot, dry conditions in the Persian Gulf. The pilots inject the seeding materials into the base of the cloud, allowing it to be lofted tens of thousands of feet by powerful updrafts.

And then, in theory, the seeding material, made up of hygroscopic (water attracting) molecules, bonds to the water vapor particles that make up a cloud. That combined particle is a little bigger and in turn attracts more water vapor particles until they form droplets, which eventually become heavy enough to fall as rain — with no appreciable environmental impact from the seeding materials, scientists say.

That is in theory. But many in the scientific community doubt the efficacy of cloud seeding altogether. A major stumbling block for many atmospheric scientists is the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of documenting net increases in rainfall.

"The problem is that once you seed, you can't tell if the cloud would have rained anyway," said Alan Robock, an atmospheric scientist at Rutgers University and an expert in evaluating climate engineering strategies.

Another problem is that the tall cumulus clouds most common in summer in the emirates and nearby areas can be so turbulent that it is difficult to determine if the seeding has any effect, said Roy Rasmussen, a senior scientist and an expert in cloud physics at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo.

Israel, a pioneer in cloud seeding, halted its program in 2021 after 50 years because it seemed to yield at best only marginal gains in precipitation. It was "not economically efficient," said Pinhas Alpert, an emeritus professor at the University of Tel Aviv who did one of the most comprehensive studies of the program.

Cloud seeding got its start in 1947, with General Electric scientists working under a military contract to find a way to de-ice planes in cold weather and create fog to obscure troop movements. Some of the techniques were later used in Vietnam to prolong the monsoon season, in an effort to make it harder for the North Vietnamese to supply their troops.

While the underlying science of cloud seeding seems straightforward, in practice, there are numerous problems. Not all clouds have the potential to produce rain, and even a cloud seemingly suitable for seeding may not have enough moisture. Another challenge in hot climates is that raindrops may evaporate before they reach the ground.

Sometimes the effect of seeding can be larger than expected, producing too much rain or snow. Or the winds can shift, carrying the clouds away from the area where the seeding was done, raising the possibility of "unintended consequences," notes a statement from the American Meteorological Society.

"You can modify a cloud, but you can't tell it what to do after you modify it," said James Fleming, an atmospheric scientist and historian of science at Colby College in Maine.

"It might snow; it might dissipate. It might go downstream; it might cause a storm in Boston," he said, referring to an early cloud-seeding experiment over Mount Greylock in the Berkshire Mountains of western Massachusetts.

	<p>This seems to be what happened in the emirates in the summer of 2019, when cloud seeding apparently generated such heavy rains in Dubai that water had to be pumped out of flooded residential neighborhoods and the upscale Dubai mall.</p> <p>Despite the difficulties of gathering data on the efficacy of cloud seeding, Mr. Al Mandous said the emirates' methods were yielding at least a 5 percent increase in rain annually — and almost certainly far more. But he acknowledged the need for data covering many more years to satisfy the scientific community.</p> <p>Over last New Year's weekend, said Mr. Al Mandous, cloud seeding coincided with a storm that produced 5.6 inches of rain in three days — more precipitation than the United Arab Emirates often gets in a year.</p> <p>In the tradition of many scientists who have tried to modify the weather, he is ever optimistic. There is the new cloud-seeding nanosubstance, and if the emirates just had more clouds to seed, he said, maybe they could make more rain for the country.</p> <p>And where would those extra clouds come from?</p> <p>"Making clouds is very difficult," he acknowledged. "But, who knows, maybe God will send us somebody who will have the idea of how to make clouds."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Govt. to stop free at-home Covid tests</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/us-government-covid-19-website-suspends-free-home-tests">https://www.q13fox.com/news/us-government-covid-19-website-suspends-free-home-tests</a>
GIST	<p>The federal government's <a href="#">COVID-19 website</a> will stop offering free at-home COVID-19 tests for Americans on Sept. 2.</p> <p>"Ordering through this program will be suspended on Friday, September 2 because Congress hasn't provided additional funding to replenish the nation's stockpile of tests," the website says.</p> <p><a href="#">President Joe Biden</a> committed in January to making 1 billion tests available to the public free of charge, including 500 million available through covidtests.gov. For months, the administration said not enough people were taking advantage of the free tests, but the supply has since run low.</p> <p>The U.S., which has the highest <a href="#">COVID-19</a> death toll in the world, is averaging nearly 89,000 new COVID cases, 5,300 new hospitalizations and 392 deaths daily, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>The number of coronavirus deaths reported worldwide fell by 15% in the past week while new infections dropped by 9%, according to the <a href="#">World</a> Health Organization.</p> <p>WHO said the predominant COVID-19 variant worldwide is omicron subvariant BA.5, which accounts for more than 70% of virus sequences shared with the world's biggest public viral database. Omicron variants account for 99% of all sequences reported in the last month.</p> <p>Earlier this week, Pfizer asked U.S. regulators to authorize its combination COVID-19 vaccine that adds protection against the newest omicron relatives, BA.4 and BA.5, a key step towards opening a fall booster campaign.</p> <p>The Food and Drug Administration had ordered vaccine makers to tweak their shots to target BA.4 and BA.5, which are better than ever at dodging immunity from earlier vaccination or infection.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Lightning fires plague North Cascades park</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/lightning-caused-fires-plaguing-the-chilliwack-area">https://komonews.com/news/local/lightning-caused-fires-plaguing-the-chilliwack-area</a>
GIST	<p>SEDRO WOOLLEY, Wash. — Lightning-related fires have been plaguing the North Cascades National Park, with nine currently ablaze in the remote Stephen Mather Wilderness area.</p> <p>Firefighters have notified visitors and provided alternate routes out of the closure area. Crews are gathering additional information to develop a safe and effective course of action to confine and contain the fires.</p> <p>Firefighters are continuing to monitor and assess the remaining fires.</p> <p>Smoke models show that smoke could impact communities in eastern Washington. Officials suggest that people take precautions when recreating outdoors when heavy smoke is present. Learn more at <a href="http://airnow.gov">airnow.gov</a> or visit <a href="https://wasmoke.blogspot.com/">https://wasmoke.blogspot.com/</a>.</p> <p>All trails and camps entering the park complex from Hannegan Pass Trailhead to the junction of Big Beaver Trail are closed. Camp closures include all camps between Boundary and Stillwell camps.</p> <p>Trail and camp closures remain in effect until further notice.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Kent, Seattle educator unions negotiations</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/kent-and-seattle-educator-unions-still-in-contract-negotiations/">https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/kent-and-seattle-educator-unions-still-in-contract-negotiations/</a>
GIST	<p>The Kent School District did not come to an agreement on a contract with its <a href="#">striking teachers</a> Friday, and district officials warned families to make alternate child care arrangements for Monday in case schools stay closed.</p> <p>Kent isn't the only district working on its contract. The Seattle Education Association's contract expires Aug. 31, and union officials are currently in negotiations with Seattle Public Schools. The first day for Seattle students is Sept. 7, while Kent was to have started Thursday.</p> <p>"Everything is on the table technically," said Jennifer Matter, SEA president, who would not answer questions about the possibility of a strike except to say the goal is to come to an agreement by the end of this month.</p> <p>Similar to the Kent Education Association, SEA is bargaining for higher pay. "We're not competitive with surrounding school districts and many people are not earning living wages," Matter said. "It's another big bucket on the table we're discussing."</p> <p>Seattle teachers make base pay that ranges between \$63,000 and \$123,000, depending on experience and degrees held, which is slightly more than teachers in Kent.</p> <p>SEA, which has about 6,000 members, is also focused on changing the special education model so students receiving special education services can spend more time in general education classrooms, Matter said. Currently, there isn't enough staffing to make that possible, she said.</p> <p>Education for multilingual and English learners is also up for negotiations, Matter said. Currently, students who need these supports have to go to specific schools that provide language services. SEA's goal is for English learner and multilingual services to be expanded to more schools so students who need these services can attend their neighborhood schools.</p> <p>The district and SEA are in agreement that these systemic changes need to happen, Matter said, "it's just how to make those changes where we're not in agreement."</p>

“I think we’ve come up with really great solutions and proposals that reflect a lot of different educators, their voices and input,” she said. “We feel really strongly that our proposal is going to make workloads more sustainable and improve working conditions so people will not be as burnt out.”

KEA, with about 1,700 members, is bargaining for higher pay, smaller class sizes, and manageable caseloads for staff working with students in special education and English learners.

According to a [Q&A posted on the district’s website Friday](#), “negotiations are continuing with a mediator from the Washington State Public Employment Relations Commission.” Union officials said those negotiations are continuing through the weekend.

Educators have expressed frustration with their salaries, saying they aren’t being paid at rates competitive enough to retain and recruit staff. The base pay range for Kent teachers is from \$61,000 to \$117,000, according to [union salary data](#).

Caseloads have also overwhelmed educators. Kathleen Gilbert, a school psychologist at Kent and Springbrook elementary schools, said the current ratio in the district is one psychologist for every 1,100 students — [more than double the recommendation](#) from the [National Association of School Psychologists](#), which is one for every 500 students.

“COVID exacerbated the needs that were already there,” Gilbert said. “We’re dealing with a generation of kids going through things nobody else has been through.” Adults, she said, “don’t know what it’s like to grow up in a pandemic.”

Eric Anderson, a twelfth grade English teacher at Kent-Meridian High School, said last year he had some classes with more than 30 students, considered a large class. He said there is a general feeling of disrespect and disconnect between district officials and those in classrooms.

Kent had an enrollment of about 25,000 students last year, making it one of the largest districts in the Seattle area. It’s also one of the most diverse school districts in Washington. About 70% of the enrollment is students of color, and 57% of students are low income, according to state figures.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Emergency: Oregon fire quadruples in size</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/oregon-fire-quadruples-in-size-governor-declares-emergency/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/oregon-fire-quadruples-in-size-governor-declares-emergency/</a>
GIST	<p>SALEM, Ore. (AP) — A wildfire in remote southwest Oregon almost quadrupled in size overnight Saturday, forcing evacuations and prompting the governor to invoke an emergency act that allows the state fire marshal to take command of suppression efforts.</p> <p>The Rum Creek Fire, which had covered around 1,200 acres (485 hectares) on Friday, increased to 4,700 acres (1,900 hectares) in size, Gov. Kate Brown’s office said Saturday.</p> <p>Authorities also ordered evacuations as a wildfire grew in rugged terrain in western Idaho. The Valley County Sheriff’s Office said on Facebook Saturday that evacuation preparedness for some neighborhoods in the rural area “have been changed to a “GO” status and we are initiating an immediate evacuation of the area.”</p> <p>Planes were scooping water from nearby Lake Cascade and dumping it on the fire, which had grown to 10,000 acres (4,046 hectares). Boaters were warned to stay clear of the path of the aircraft.</p> <p>In Oregon, the Josephine County Sheriff’s Office ordered evacuations of several unincorporated communities along the Rogue River, which is popular among rafters. Sections of the river were closed to recreation by federal officials because of the fire.</p>

“The Rum Creek Fire grew rapidly overnight, requiring additional resources to battle the fire and support the state’s response,” Brown said in a statement. “This is a good reminder that conditions can change quickly, and that fire knows no bounds.”

Brown’s declaration cleared the way for the State Fire Marshal to mobilize firefighters and equipment to assist local firefighters and to support a coordinated response.

The unincorporated community of Galice was among those ordered evacuated. The county fairgrounds in Grants Pass has been designated as an evacuation shelter, with space for people, their pets and livestock.

The fire was started by lightning on Aug. 17 and killed Logan Taylor, a 25-year-old firefighter, after he was struck by a tree the next day. Brown has ordered all flags at Oregon public institutions to be flown at half-staff on Monday in honor of Taylor, with his memorial service to be held the same day.

“He will be remembered for his bravery, courage, and commitment to protecting Oregonians from wildfire,” Brown said.

A wildfire near Spokane, Washington, prompted evacuations Friday but has been brought under control, emergency officials said Saturday.

The fire was held to 41 acres (17 hectares) with no structures burned, the Spokane County Fire District said on Facebook.

And in Northern California, a wildfire that broke out Saturday in Nevada County that prompted local evacuation orders, according to the Fresno Bee newspaper. The Still Fire had burned 30 acres (12 hectares) by mid-afternoon and was 0% percent contained, according to state fire officials.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Pakistan deadly floods of ‘epic proportions’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/world/asia/pakistan-flood.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/world/asia/pakistan-flood.html</a>
GIST	<p>Devastating floods have surged across Pakistan, overflowing riverbanks and bridges, inundating houses and fields and killing more than 100 people this weekend, officials said late Saturday.</p> <p>The floods, which have been driven by unusually heavy monsoon rains, have killed more than 1,000 people since mid-June, the country’s National Disaster Management Authority said.</p> <p>Sherry Rehman, Pakistan’s climate change minister, called the flooding a “climate-induced humanitarian disaster” of “epic proportions.”</p> <p>“It is beyond the capacity of any one administration or government to rehabilitate and even manage the rescue and relief,” she said, calling for greater international assistance. “We need all the help we can get.”</p> <p>Record flooding has inundated spots all along the Indus River, which runs the length of the country, including at the Tarbela Dam in the north of the country and Kotri, a riverside city more than 600 miles to the south. The Kabul and Swat Rivers in northern Pakistan have also seen extremely high water levels.</p> <p>Rainfall has been nearly three times the 30-year nationwide average, the disaster agency said Saturday. In Sindh Province, which borders the Arabian Sea to the south, rainfall is nearly five times the average.</p> <p>Syed Murad Ali Shah, the chief minister of Sindh, said vast areas had been affected by flooding. “It seems like the entire Indus River has overflowed across Sindh,” he told Geo News, a television news broadcaster in Pakistan.</p> <p>Nearly a million homes have been damaged since mid-June, including more than 260,000 in the past day, the disaster management agency said late Saturday.</p>

	<p>More than 33 million people have been affected by flooding this summer, the agency said, with more than 50,000 rescued and close to 500,000 now living in relief camps.</p> <p>Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, “The magnitude of the calamity is bigger than estimated.” He wrote on Twitter that while a full picture of the destruction was still being compiled, the continuing rain had “caused devastation across the country” with losses comparable to catastrophic flooding in 2010. That disaster affected 18 million people and killed 1,985.</p> <p>Ms. Rehman posted a video on Twitter from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province in the northwest, that showed roaring floodwaters nearing the top of a bridge. The bridge had been rebuilt five meters higher — about 16 feet — after it was destroyed during record flooding in 2010, she said.</p> <p>“Now the water is inundating the bridge,” she wrote. “They thought they were building back better by raising it much higher.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Ukraine gathers evidence Putin ‘ecocide’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/destroyed-nature-ukrainians-race-to-gather-evidence-of-putins-ecocide">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/destroyed-nature-ukrainians-race-to-gather-evidence-of-putins-ecocide</a>
GIST	<p>The woods outside Chernihiv were quiet in late August when Anatoliy Pavelko scrambled into a 10-metre bomb crater with a trowel and an icebox full of sample jars. He wanted to find out what the Russian FAB-250 bomb left behind when it carved this gaping hole into the ground in the spring.</p> <p>Four months earlier, the environmental lawyer was dug in on a frontline just a few kilometres away, shells crashing around him in the bitter fight to keep Russian forces out of Kyiv.</p> <p>Now he has taken temporary leave from his unit of volunteers and returned to Chernihiv for a more familiar battle on a different front in the war against Moscow.</p> <p>Russia’s invasion has killed tens of thousands of Ukrainians and destroyed homes and entire cities. It is also devastating Ukraine’s environment, an “ecocide” that activists worry is going largely unrecorded amid the broader national tragedy.</p> <p>“Most people pay attention to loss of life and damage to infrastructure, but lots of people and even the national government forget about losses and damage caused to the environment,” said Pavelko, who specialised in protection of rivers before the war.</p> <p>Now he and other activists have launched an urgent campaign to catalogue the damage and future risks, from toxins left by shells in agricultural soil to chemicals leached into groundwater after bombings and fires, and from ancient woodland torn apart by modern weapons to rivers tainted by sewage after waste treatment sites were bombed.</p> <p>They hope to use their investigations to bring an international lawsuit and force Moscow to pay clean-up costs and compensation.</p> <p>“If we expect <a href="#">Russians to pay for the damage caused</a>, we should pay special attention to the facts of the crime, and this is a situation where they aren’t properly documented.”</p> <p>The environmental risks of Moscow’s war have been brought into sharp focus by a <a href="#">string of crises at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant</a>, Europe’s largest. It was <a href="#">seized by Russian forces in March</a> and used as a military staging post, with Ukrainian and international officials warning that reckless behaviour by occupying troops has sharply raised the risk of a nuclear accident.</p>

But environmentalists want to highlight the damage that has already taken place. They have chosen Chernihiv for a case study in part because the Russians have left, so research is not dangerous, but also because of the intensity of the fighting here.

Its streets, fields and forests provide a grim catalogue of the many types of environmental damage inflicted by Russian troops and of the contamination caused by different weapons systems.

The city is within a few dozen kilometres of the border with Belarus, where Russian troops massed for the invasion and from where they launched missiles. It endured a 41-day siege with attacks that tainted water, air and soil, destroyed natural resources and damaged a key water treatment plant. Some of the effects lasted only hours, while others will be felt for years and yet more could linger permanently without clean-up efforts.

At the Epicentr K building supplies superstore that was badly hit then went up in flames, the acrid smell of burnt plastic still lingers months later. Chemicals released in smoke will have settled across the city and other toxins have probably leached into groundwater from the burnt ruins after months of rain.

The environmentalists captured photos of the damage, which will be cross-referenced with company documents to try to calculate how many tonnes of plastics and other materials went up in flames and what chemicals they released.

There is medium-term environmental damage at a key water treatment plant in the city, damaged in repeated shelling, so it no longer has capacity to treat all the sewage piped in after heavy rains.

Managers fear in the autumn they will have to release untreated waste into a nearby river that flows down to the capital. “If the water isn’t cleaned, people in Kyiv will have shit in their drinking water,” plant manager Natalia Mazyuk said bluntly. The facility had been newly upgraded; one of the tanks that was put out of service had only gone into operation a month before it was bombed.

A city oil depot, set ablaze in a bombing, burned for days, causing breathing problems and releasing chemicals that will have settled on the ground and sunk into water supplies.

There are trees and whole areas of woodland destroyed by shelling and bombs that will take decades to grow back. Their ecosystems will also need years to recover, robbing the people of Chernihiv of an important resource.

“Environmentalists insist that the beauty of nature also has value. People have lost places for recreation, where they spent time with their families and they can’t just be rebuilt like, for example, a supermarket,” said Hanna Hopko, a Ukrainian activist and politician who is part of the campaign for environmental accountability.

“We need generations to see 150- year-old oak trees grow back from first planting,” she said. “Even my daughter will never see this destroyed nature [fully restored], probably only her grandkids.”

And finally there are the shell craters in the forest that contain clues to the deadly long-term legacy of even those munitions that did not kill or injure anyone. “There are toxic materials in a crater after the explosion,” said Kateryna Polyanska, an analyst with the activist group [Environment People Law](#). “A lot are landing in agricultural fields and these can migrate through the food chain through agricultural production. Also, these elements can leach through the ground soil to our rivers, then go to our bodies.”

In Chernihiv, Russia’s military used almost every weapon in its arsenal, from long-range missiles to short-range shells. Their twisted remains are stored at an old industrial site on the city’s outskirts, along with the almost unrecognisable fragments of a fighter jet shot down in the area.

It is the kind of open-air memorial to the terrible destructive power of modern technology that environmentalists hope could also underpin calculations of damage nationwide, including areas still too heavily contested for them to visit.

Pavelko and Polyanska collect soil from bomb craters to be analysed for contamination, along with samples from untouched ground nearby to provide a control measurement.

The difference will help estimate what came from bombs and what might be historical local pollution from heavy industry or past disasters, including the 1986 nuclear disaster at Chernobyl, which is only about 50 miles west.

If they can calculate the pollution caused by a particular type of munitions in Chernihiv, they can also use that to calculate damage in areas that are harder to reach.

“We need to know more about different types of missiles, bombs, etc. When you know typical pollution that craters contain, you can estimate what might be in other craters,” said Polyanska. “Sometimes we have no access to these places because there is still a war and it is very dangerous, but we can assess these things with satellite images.”

While they collect evidence in Chernihiv, they have been running a media campaign to raise awareness nationwide of environmental crimes.

“Nature is a part of what’s helping us to recover. And this is why environmental crimes are a part of a Russian full-scale war, genocidal war,” Hopko said. “It’s also why we have to demand compensations, for this beauty, which our next generations in some part of Ukraine will not see. Instead, we have to find money just to clean our water, clean our land and air from toxic hazardous elements.”

Ukrainians have been racing to rebuild areas that were occupied or saw heavy fighting as they search to restore some kind of normality to daily life. The clean-up is inspiring, but it is also worrying for lawyers who need evidence. “When we were here in spring, it looked really horrible. But in three months, lots of things were repaired,” Pavelko said.

“A part of serious damage, not only environmental but also economic damage, was not properly documented. Ukrainians try to repair everything as soon as possible. But you have to document everything if you are going to get compensation.”

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HEADLINE	08/27 Day 185 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-185-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-185-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelenskiy said the situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant remains “very risky”</b> after two of its six reactors were reconnected to the grid following shelling that caused Europe’s largest nuclear power plant to be <a href="#">disconnected for the first time in its history</a>. “Let me stress that the situation remains very risky and dangerous,” he said in his regular evening address on Friday, praising Ukrainian experts working to “avert the worst-case scenario.”</li><li>• <b>Residents near the Zaporizhzhia plant have reportedly been given iodine tablets</b>, amid mounting fears that the fighting around the complex could trigger a catastrophe.</li><li>• <b>Zelenskiy said the world narrowly avoided a “radiation disaster”</b> on Thursday when electricity to the Zaporizhzhia plant was cut for hours after fires broke out around the Russian-occupied complex in south-eastern <a href="#">Ukraine</a>.</li><li>• <b>A team of inspectors from the United Nations nuclear watchdog are poised to make an emergency visit to the Zaporizhzhia plant</b>, according to reports. Sources have told the Wall Street Journal <a href="#">it is “almost certain”</a> that a mission from the International Atomic Energy Agency will visit the plant early next week, although details are still being completed.</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ukraine's deputy prime minister, Iryna Vereshchuk, has announced plans to expand mandatory evacuations for civilians living on the war's frontlines.</b> Speaking on national television, she said evacuating women with children and elderly people would be a priority from some districts of the <a href="#">eastern Kharkiv region, and the southern Zaporizhzhia and Mykolaiv regions</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Ukrainian forces have struck an important bridge used by Russian occupying forces in the southern Kherson region,</b> according to Ukraine's southern military command. The Daryivskiy Bridge <a href="#">is the only Russian-controlled crossing across the Inhulets river</a>, which splits the Russian-occupied land west of the Dnipro into two parts.</li> <li>• <b>Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, an ally of president Vladimir Putin,</b> said in a French television interview on Friday that Russia was prepared to hold talks with Zelenskyy subject to certain conditions, but warned Moscow would not stop its assault until its goals had been achieved. "Renouncing (Ukraine's) participation in the North Atlantic alliance is now vital, but it is already insufficient in order to establish peace," Medvedev told LCI television in quotes reported by Russian news agencies.</li> <li>• <b>EU energy ministers will gather for an urgent meeting as soon as possible to discuss the energy crisis</b> following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Czech prime minister said. The Czech Republic currently <a href="#">holds the presidency of the European Council</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Russia's claim that it is deliberately slowing the pace of its military campaign in Ukraine is "almost certainly deliberate misinformation",</b> according to British intelligence. The <a href="#">latest UK Ministry of Defence report</a> said Russia's offensive had stalled "because of poor Russian military performance and fierce Ukrainian resistance".</li> <li>• <b>The Belarusian president has said his country's SU-24 warplanes have been re-fitted to carry nuclear armaments.</b> Alexander Lukashenko said he had previously agreed to the move with his Russian counterpart, Putin, and <a href="#">warned that his country was ready to respond to "serious provocation"</a> from the west instantly.</li> <li>• <b>Russia is burning off large amounts of natural gas that it would previously have exported to Germany while energy costs soar in Europe,</b> the <a href="#">BBC has reported</a>. According to the broadcaster, which cites an analysis by Rystad Energy, a plant near Russia's border with Finland is burning an estimated £8.4m worth of gas every day.</li> <li>• <b>The head of the UK's energy regulator, Ofgem, has blamed Russia for driving up energy prices,</b> resulting in the UK price cap rising by 80%. Ofgem on Friday <a href="#">approved a £1,578 increase on the current price cap</a> of £1,971 for the average dual-fuel tariff.</li> <li>• <b>The German ambassador to the UK has acknowledged there is a risk public support for Ukraine could wane this winter</b> as the energy crisis intensifies. Putin was "using gas as a weapon" in the UK and all of Europe, <a href="#">Miguel Berger said</a>. "He wants to test our resolve."</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Russia opens TV station occupied Kherson</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/tavriya-tv-will-promote-happiness-love-russia-opens-station-occupied-kherson">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/tavriya-tv-will-promote-happiness-love-russia-opens-station-occupied-kherson</a>
GIST	<p>In a small car park in the Russian-occupied city of Kherson, there was a smattering of applause last week as Anton Alikhanov cut a red ribbon to mark the ceremonial opening of a local television station, Tavriya TV.</p> <p>The new channel is part of a propaganda drive in Kherson that Russia hopes will help cement its hold over the southern Ukrainian city, occupied in the first days of the invasion. Alikhanov, the governor of Russia's Kaliningrad region, said journalists from his city would come to Kherson to "help" the new channel find the right message. The Kremlin has appointed various Russian regions to "curate" different parts of occupied <a href="#">Ukraine</a>.</p> <p>Kyrylo Stremousov, the deputy head of Kherson's Russian occupation authorities, made no secret of the channel's mission: "Tavriya will now start work, as one big machine that will not just do propaganda, but will also promote family, goodness, happiness and love, of course together with big, united Russia."</p>

In the towns near Kyiv that were occupied in the spring, Russian rule was a time of terror when even stepping outside was dangerous for residents. In Kherson, too, there are credible reports of kidnappings, arrests and torture. But here, there is another side to Russian rule. The Kremlin is attempting to portray a happy, prosperous future inside Russia as it [gears up to hold a “referendum”](#) to annex Kherson and three other Ukrainian regions.

In telephone interviews, residents of Kherson described an ominous atmosphere in the city’s deserted streets as much of the population has fled and those who remain are scared to talk freely and worry about what the coming months will bring.

But on television, residents can watch a through-the-looking-glass version of their own reality, in which the population has joyously welcomed Russian rule. In the new media world Russia has created in Kherson, Moscow is not an invading force, but a benevolent liberator, bringing economic plenty and cultural renaissance to Kherson and saving its citizens from Ukrainian Nazis.

“When I watch the television news or I open the pro-Russian Telegram channels, it feels like I’ve stepped into some kind of completely alternative reality,” said one Kherson resident in his 30s, who asked not to be named.

Until Tavriya gets up and running, the main local channel in Kherson is VTV Plus, which has functioned for more than a decade. In late February, just before the Russian occupation, VTV broadcasts were in Ukrainian, and included interviews with locals who had joined territorial defence and armed neighbourhood watch brigades, who spoke of defending their territory against the Russians.

In the weeks after the occupation, VTV attempted to remain neutral, showing interviews with the Ukrainian mayor, Ihor Kolykhaiev, who stayed in the city and continued working even after the Russians took over. During this time, there were a series of pro-Ukrainian rallies in Kherson, with unarmed protesters facing down Russian soldiers.

But the Russians soon began a crackdown on dissent, and the television station was no exception. The owners of VTV were long known to be sympathetic towards Russia, but a VTV employee, who remains in Kherson, said the majority of journalists there resigned soon after the Russian occupation.

She said: “Those who stayed are mostly the ones without much experience. Some journalists from Crimea and St Petersburg have come, and they are now in charge.”

By the start of the summer, the broadcasts had switched to Russian language, and the tone had become wholeheartedly pro-Russia. There was a focus on telling residents that resistance to Russian rule was futile.

One June news bulletin featured a 19-year-old named only as “Ivan”, saying he was a Ukrainian army conscript but had come to give himself up because his mother had advised him to. He mumbled his details to a Russian army officer.

Shortly after, the channel aired an item in which four purported members of the pro-Ukrainian territorial defence of Kherson came to surrender, claiming they felt abandoned by Ukraine. “It’s time to stop these partisan games,” said one of the men, who at one point appeared to be crying. He was one of numerous VTV interviewees to look visibly uncomfortable and nervous as they claimed on camera to be happy about Russia arriving.

While there is widespread coercion, it is also clear that a minority of residents have eagerly cooperated with Russian rule. Some are pensioners, nostalgic for their youth, who see Moscow’s rule as a return to the Soviet past.

Others are careerists, who see opportunities as the Kremlin struggles to find local people to fill key posts. These include the region's deputy governor Stremousov, previously an anti-vaccine blogger and political marginal who garnered 1.5% of the vote in the 2020 mayoral elections.

Stremousov now appears almost daily on the news, particularly after the Kremlin-appointed local governor, Volodymyr Saldo, was taken to hospital amid a suspected poisoning earlier in the summer.

However, it is clear many people are cooperating because they feel they have no choice. The VTV employee whom the Guardian spoke to said she had stayed in Kherson for family reasons, and needed to keep working to have an income. "I don't really like working here any more, the city is completely changed, but what can I do? I just work slowly so few things really get done."

Olena Vanina, the Kherson correspondent for Ukrainian channel 1+1, said in the weeks after the occupation, she made reports using a mobile phone to keep a low profile. "But after a while, people got too scared to show their faces, and nobody wanted to be filmed," she said. She left the city in June, like many other Ukrainian journalists.

To fill the gap, Russia has set up a "media school" in the city, promising speedy training to anyone who is interested.

"A number of journalists fled the region because they fell under the influence of Ukrainian propaganda that told them they would be killed, tortured and raped. Others are still too scared to come to work," said Aleksandr Malkevich, the St Petersburg-based journalist and television producer who is running the school, in a telephone interview.

In a local television piece about the school, Malkevich, who is on a US sanctions list, said people with no journalism experience are welcome to join and be trained.

As well as taking over the local channel, Russia has also blocked the reception of Ukrainian national channels, and replaced them with Russian television, where the war in Ukraine is not called a war, but a "special military operation".

In late May, Russian authorities rerouted Kherson's internet traffic through servers in Russia, occupied Crimea and Donetsk. Now, access to all Ukrainian domains are blocked without use of a VPN, ensuring Moscow has total control over what information about the war people receive.

Authorities have also resurrected the Soviet-era newspaper Naddneprianskaya Pravda, which now claims to have a print run of 250,000. "Kherson is Russian land!" proclaims the main headline of the first issue.

The newspaper's content gives a good insight into the propaganda priorities for the Russian administration. There are repeated articles promising residents increased benefits, pensions and more work opportunities. Unsubtle photo collages show babies superimposed on stacks of rouble notes, alongside articles explaining how life in Russia will be all milk and honey.

Multiple articles denounce the "Nazi" ideology of the Ukrainian state, and one issue quotes the actor-turned-Russian-propagandist Steven Seagal, who says Russia and Ukraine are "one big family" and that an "external force is spending huge money on propaganda" in order to divide them.

There are repeated claims of the "overwhelming desire" of Kherson residents to join Russia in a referendum, but there are also plenty of threats. One frontpage article warns of "tough measures" against those who threaten public order, indicating that speaking out against Russian rule is now considered to be against the law.

"People who discredit Russian government organs, or spread false information about their activities ... will also be brought to justice," said the article.

HEADLINE	08/27 Russia blocks UN nuclear treaty agreement
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/russia-blocks-un-nuclear-treaty-agreement-over-zaporizhzhia-clause">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/russia-blocks-un-nuclear-treaty-agreement-over-zaporizhzhia-clause</a>
GIST	<p>Russia has blocked an agreement at the <a href="#">United Nations</a> that was aimed at bolstering the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) because Moscow objected to a clause about control over the Zaporizhzhia power plant in Ukraine.</p> <p>The failure to agree to a joint statement after four weeks of debate and negotiation among 151 countries at the UN in New York is the latest blow to hopes of maintaining an arms control regime and keeping a lid on a rekindled arms race.</p> <p>The closing session was put off for more than four hours over Russian refusal to agree to a <a href="#">lengthy statement of support for the NPT</a> which included a reference to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is occupied by Russian forces close to the frontline in Ukraine's south-east.</p> <p>Alarm was raised on Thursday when the plant was temporarily cut off from the Ukrainian electricity grid but the connection was restored. Russian forces are reportedly planning to sever the plant <a href="#">more permanently from the grid</a>, raising concerns of a possible disaster.</p> <p>A paragraph in the final draft text on Friday stressed "the paramount importance of ensuring control by Ukraine's competent authorities of nuclear facilities ... such as the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant".</p> <p>The Russian delegation was the only one to speak against the agreed text, but blamed the breakdown of the conference on Ukraine and its "protectors", calling the negotiations a "one-sided game". After delivering its statement, the Russian delegation walked out of the UN chamber.</p> <p>The NPT was a deal struck in 1968 in which nuclear weapons states pledged to disarm while states without nuclear weapons promised not to acquire them. At the time there were five acknowledged nuclear powers, though Israel had secretly developed a weapon of its own by then. There are now nine states which possess nuclear warheads. Before the NPT came into force, some had predicted there would be dozens countries with their own arsenals.</p> <p>It is the second five-yearly review conference that has failed to issue a joint statement recommitting to the goals of the treaty. It has been 12 years since there was even partial agreement.</p> <p>But Sarah Bidgood, the director of the Eurasia nonproliferation program at the James Martin Centre for Nonproliferation Studies, said the NPT was not irreparably broken, and that every other country would have accepted the text.</p> <p>"The bigger takeaway for me is just how far-reaching the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine has become," she said. "Even at some of the darkest moments of the cold war, cooperation in support of the NPT was often possible. But what we saw at the final plenary today does not bode well for the future of nuclear diplomacy, including on issues like arms control."</p> <p>Beatrice Fihn, the executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, said the disarmament elements in the proposed text had already been diluted by all five of the official nuclear powers recognised by the treaty – Russia, the US, France, the UK and China.</p> <p>"So, in all honesty, I don't think it makes much difference," she said. "This is the very dangerous game the nuclear weapon states are playing by consistently failing to achieve anything in this treaty. At some point, non nuclear weapon states are really going to start questioning whether or not this treaty is worth the effort, and if it's relevant."</p> <p>Fihn argued that the continued failure of NPT review conferences to find common ground meant it was all the more important for countries to join the treaty for the prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW), which</p>

	<p>seeks to ban them outright. It came into force in January 2021, and so far 66 states have ratified or acceded to the treaty.</p> <p>"It's going to be really relevant that we quickly move forward with the TPNW and get more states," Fihn said. "It's really an insurance that if [the NPT] continues to fail, that we don't stand without anything."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Fentanyl overdoses spike in North Sound</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/fentanyl-overdoses-spike-in-north-sound">https://www.q13fox.com/news/fentanyl-overdoses-spike-in-north-sound</a>
GIST	<p><b>EVERETT, Wash.</b> - <a href="#">Fentanyl</a> again is proving to be a <a href="#">serious public safety crisis with a rash of overdoses</a> in the north Sound.</p> <p>Between the last week of July and the end of the first week in August, emergency responders recorded at least 40 overdoses compared to the first three weeks of July when there were only 10.</p> <p>Officials say this <a href="#">crisis is showing no signs of slowing down and there is a warning that fentanyl</a> is now being found in multi-colored counterfeit pills that look like the real deal.</p> <p>"Hope really does mean a lot to people," said Lindsey Arrington.</p> <p>The non-profit Hope Soldiers organization was founded by Arrington, where she and volunteers use hope as a weapon in the battle against addiction. Arrington estimates around 100 people have been <a href="#">pulled from the grips of addiction</a> since she began the organization about a decade ago.</p> <p>But addiction today looks different compared to when she started her own journey. She says fentanyl is all but everywhere and the users she meets end up needing more drugs to fulfill a high that lasts shorter than others.</p> <p>Fentanyl is prolific, according to the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office. In the past few months, <a href="#">deputies are finding it in powder or crystal form</a>, and as multi-colored counterfeit pills on the street.</p> <p>Overdoses and deaths connected to the powerful opioid fentanyl are rising so fast in King County that health and county officials are calling it a public health crisis.</p> <p>The department says 67 overdoses were fatal in the first quarter of 2022 alone. Plus, experts say treatment providers are seeing more users dependent on fentanyl than anything else.</p> <p>"No longer heroin, no longer pharmaceutical, but manufactured fentanyl," said Caleb Banta-Green, a professor at the University of Washington School of Medicine. "It's now the <a href="#">predominant opioid</a> we're seeing."</p> <p>Those addicted to fentanyl today can access promising therapies, but Banta-Green worries programs do not do enough to keep users safe before they agree to or are able to begin treatment.</p> <p>"Some people are prepared and ready for treatment or healthcare today, but that's a minority," he said, stressing the importance of <a href="#">harm reduction strategies</a>. "I want something for everybody every day."</p> <p>Arrington says those lost to addiction should not be forgotten as remembering their struggle can be an inspiration for those battling on their own.</p> <p>"It's terrible and sad and avoidable," she said. "When it does happen, we don't let it happen in vain. We use it for the good of the people that need to know that that life matters and so does theirs."</p> <p>This coming Wednesday, neighbors will come together for the 6th annual "<a href="#">A Night to Remember, A Time to Act</a>," memorial which honors the hundreds of lives taken by addiction locally.</p>

	A resource fair is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. at the Snohomish County Plaza followed by a candlelight vigil.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Not monkeypox doctors thought they knew</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/health/monkeypox-symptoms.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/health/monkeypox-symptoms.html</a>
GIST	<p>Early in the monkeypox outbreak, a man in his 20s arrived at an emergency department in Northern California, tiny blisters on his lips, hands and back. Within 12 hours, doctors diagnosed him with monkeypox.</p> <p>That's where their certainty ended. The patient did not have fever, aches, weakness, pain or other symptoms typical of the disease. He did not know when or how he had become infected. He had not had sexual contact with anyone for months, he said, and had not touched — as far as he knew — anyone with pox, as the lesions are called, or other symptoms.</p> <p>At the onset of the outbreak, scientists thought they knew when and how the monkeypox virus was spread, what the disease looked like and who was most vulnerable. The 47,000 cases identified worldwide have upended many of those expectations.</p> <p>Monkeypox patients have turned up with what looked like mosquito bites, pimples or ingrown hairs, not the large pustules usually associated with the infection. Some did not even have visible lesions but felt excruciating pain when swallowing, urinating or emptying their bowels.</p> <p>Some had headaches or depression, confusion and seizures. Others had severe eye infections or inflammation of the heart muscle. At least three of the six deaths reported so far were linked to encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain.</p> <p>“We really are seeing a very, very wide range of presentation,” said Dr. Boghuma Titanji, an infectious-disease physician at a clinic in Atlanta that serves people living with HIV.</p> <p>Scientists now know that the monkeypox virus lurks in saliva, semen and other bodily fluids, sometimes for weeks after recovery. The virus has always been known to spread through close contact, but many researchers suspect the infection may also be transmitted through sex itself.</p> <p>The California patient had virus in his throat, but no respiratory symptoms, and in his rectum, but without pain or pox. The case underscores other research suggesting that the virus may be spread even by people with atypical or asymptomatic infections, said Dr. Abraar Karan, who diagnosed the patient and published a recent case report.</p> <p>In another study, also published this month, anal swabs of 200 men without symptoms turned up 13 who were positive for monkeypox. Only two of them later developed symptoms.</p> <p>“It's no longer correct to say it can't be transmitted asymptotically,” said Dr. Chloe Orkin, an infectious-disease physician at Queen Mary University of London. “I think that it means that our working model of how it's spread is incorrect.”</p> <p>Early in the outbreak, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that “people who do not have monkeypox symptoms cannot spread the virus to others.” The agency on July 29 changed that phrasing to say that “scientists are still researching” the possibility of asymptomatic transmission.</p> <p>In a statement to The New York Times, an agency spokesperson acknowledged recent evidence that asymptomatic cases were possible but said that it was still uncertain whether people without symptoms could spread the virus and that more research was needed.</p>



When the first few dozen cases of monkeypox emerged in Europe, spreading of the virus through sexual contact and genital lesions came as a surprise to many scientists. But it shouldn't have.

Nigerian researchers reported a similar pattern in 2017, when they documented 228 cases, many of them young men with genital ulcers. (The patients identified as heterosexual in a subsequent study, but Nigeria criminalizes same-sex behavior.)

Those cases were the first reported in Nigeria in 40 years, and the World Health Organization helped the country "mount the local response, with the goal to control spread," said Fadela Chaib, a WHO spokesperson.

But the unusual symptoms of the patients went unnoticed. "If what is happening in Europe and the global North had not happened, I don't think that paper would be discussed," said Dr. Dimie Ogoina, who led a study describing the cases.

"We have this disease that's more than 50 years old, and there's a lot of things we still don't know — and that's because the condition has been largely restricted to Africa," he said.

In late May, Orkin contacted several international colleagues to put together what turned out to be the largest study of monkeypox. Hundreds of physicians from 16 countries eventually contributed information about the cases they were seeing.

They changed the reporting forms as the disease came into sharper focus, adding the possibility of a single pox, lesions in the throat or rectum, and medical complications — features that were "not included in international case definitions of monkeypox," Orkin said.

The resulting analysis of 528 patients was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* on July 21. A few days later, Orkin alerted several national health agencies, knowing the findings should alter the case definitions that doctors consult when diagnosing patients.

Britain's Health Security Agency and the European Centers for Disease Control both replied the same day. Britain added some of the new symptoms to its monkeypox case definition three days later. The European agency invited Orkin to present her findings.

In an interview in late July, Orkin reflected that during pandemics, public health agencies are considered the experts, and officials educate doctors on the disease and its treatment. Yet, it's clinicians who see the symptoms firsthand.

"It seems to me that consulting with clinicians in the field may have been helpful," she said. National health agencies have been slow to understand the virus's many manifestations in the current outbreak, she added.

Orkin is president of the Medical Women's Federation, past president of the British HIV Association and a governing councilmember of the International AIDS Society. "I've got a loud voice," she said, "and I'm still finding it difficult to get a response."

Senior members of the WHO responded to Orkin on Aug. 2, asking to discuss the cases that she and her colleagues had described. The CDC did not reply to Orkin but added rectal pain and bleeding, along with other new symptoms, to its guidance to clinicians on Aug. 5.

The new CDC definition mentions lesions in the mouth but does not describe the range or importance of pox in the mouth, eyes and urethra. In its statement, the agency said it was aware of Orkin's findings and had begun studies "that will help us better understand the range and importance of lesions at these and other bodily sites."

Based on reports that the virus persists in semen for weeks, Britain recommended that men who recover from monkeypox use condoms for 12 weeks after infection, a tacit acknowledgment that this may be a transmission route.

The CDC has not gone along, saying that “researchers are working with our partners to learn if, and how frequently, the virus is being spread through contact with semen.”

The agency should advise men to wear condoms for a few weeks, as Britain has, Karan said. “We do not know how long people can transmit through semen,” he said. “I think they should communicate that clearly.”

For patients, outdated case definitions and guidance can have serious implications. Cameron French, 30, was exposed to the virus on July 6. Two weeks later, he developed a sore throat, head and body aches, painful urination and three bumps — on his face, a thigh and an elbow.

Yet, on his first visit to a clinic, on July 25, his doctor did not connect the symptoms. She told him the bump on his thigh was an ingrown hair and tested him for a urinary tract infection.

He went back three days later. This time, the doctor agreed to test him for monkeypox. After he tested positive, he had to push once again, this time to get the antiviral tecovirimat.

French said he was most frustrated by the lack of guidance on how to distinguish a potential new pox from a pimple so he could end his monthlong isolation. “That’s been a big ambiguous question mark,” he said. “That’s been hard.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Seattle downtown recovery hope? Depends</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/theres-hope-in-seattles-downtown-recovery-depending-on-the-data-you-use/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/theres-hope-in-seattles-downtown-recovery-depending-on-the-data-you-use/</a>
GIST	<p>There’s more than one way to gauge downtown Seattle’s recovery from the pandemic.</p> <p>Earlier this week, I looked at a study that analyzed <a href="#">smartphone data</a> and found visits to downtown were at just 52% of their 2019 levels.</p> <p>But there are other metrics that can be used to measure downtown’s recovery. The Downtown Seattle Association tracks a variety of them, and they’ve recently <a href="#">shared a lot of this data on their website, downtownseattle.org</a>.</p> <p>If you have the perception that it’s all bad news, these charts will surprise you.</p> <p>For example, the number of visitors to downtown Seattle in both June and July was at more than 90% of 2019 levels. In July, nearly 3 million people visited downtown, which is down only about 300,000 from the same period in 2019. This number does not include people who live or work downtown, according to the DSA. And before you question the veracity of this data because the DSA’s mission is to advocate for downtown, know that the DSA is not the source — the agency is just sharing it. The data comes from Placer.ai, a national firm that provides foot-traffic analytics.</p> <p>Another bright spot for downtown is hotel occupancy. It surged this summer, reaching 94% of its 2019 levels in July, according to a chart on the DSA website that uses figures from hospitality-data provider STR, provided by Visit Seattle.</p> <p>“I think it’s been remarkable progress,” said Jon Scholes, president and CEO of the DSA. “We’ve had the No. 1 or No. 2 hotel occupancy in the country for most of the summer, and total foot traffic is inching up there close to what it was in 2019.”</p>

There's something significant to keep in mind about these numbers, though. The DSA uses the broadest geographic definition of downtown, which includes all downtown neighborhoods from the stadiums to Seattle Center, and extends east of Interstate 5 to include First Hill and Capitol Hill (up to Broadway).

But I think when most Seattleites talk about downtown, they're really thinking about the Central Business District — or at most, the neighborhoods west of I-5. And this does make a difference, because the recovery from the pandemic isn't uniform across all these neighborhoods.

For example, the Capitol Hill nightlife and restaurant scene appears to be back in full force — this seems true in Belltown, too. Or if you've visited Pike Place Market, Seattle Center or walked along the waterfront this summer, you probably felt things were back to normal.

But if you visit the heart of downtown — the city's retail and employment core — you're reminded how hard the pandemic hit this city, and that we still have a long way to go.

Even so, Scholes says the data shared by the DSA is primarily capturing what's happening in the center of downtown because that's where the greatest amount of change has happened in recent months. He also said metrics like office workers and hotel visitors largely capture activity in the city's core, where he feels the recent improvements are significant.

"There's no doubt we still face a lot of challenges [but] I think we've seen some progress," he said.

He noted reports of violent and property crime dropped nearly 20% from winter to spring this year. But many people's perception of downtown as a dangerous or lawless place remains a problem, Scholes said. And employers need to feel downtown is safe before they bring their workers back to the office, he added.

Another chart on the DSA's website shows that as of July, worker foot traffic downtown is at just 39% of 2019 levels, according to data from Placer.ai.

"The office workers are still largely missing; they were a big contributor to the energy on the streets," Scholes said. "The conditions on the street are the number one factor in the minds of employers in bringing people back downtown."

The June and July worker-foot-traffic numbers may seem low, but they still represent a significant improvement from earlier months. And Scholes believes the number of workers downtown will continue to grow.

But he also pointed out downtown's strength is the area that is not wholly dependent on office workers, or on any single industry or sector. People come downtown for a wide variety of experiences, such as sporting events, arts and entertainment, conventions and shopping. The cruise ships are back, too.

And the streets of downtown are increasingly filled by residents in addition to visitors. As of July, there were 56,000 occupied housing units downtown, above the pre-pandemic high of 52,000, according to commercial real estate data provider CoStar.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Rents soared, homeless camp, trash arrived</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/trash-piled-up-at-seattle-mobile-home-park-as-rents-rose-homeless-camp-grew/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/trash-piled-up-at-seattle-mobile-home-park-as-rents-rose-homeless-camp-grew/</a>
GIST	<p>For more than two weeks, trash had piled up in the five overflowing dumpsters at Halcyon Mobile Home Park, one of Seattle's last manufactured home communities.</p> <p>Usually, garbage at the 76-home park near Haller Lake gets picked up twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays. But when property managers attempted to solve one problem — a neighboring homeless encampment that was spilling into the park — by erecting a fence in early August, they created a new one</p>

for the 50 or 60 people living in the park. Garbage trucks weren't able to get to the dumpsters where residents put their trash. By Thursday, the stench of rotting garbage wafted through the hot August air.

For [over 50 years](#), Halcyon has been an affordable housing option for Seattle seniors. Neighbors banded together to [save their community](#) from redevelopment in 2019 when they learned the park was up for sale, and in December the city [granted](#) the park special zoning status just for mobile homes.

Lately, though, residents say the park has suffered from a combination of poor communication with management, unrest from the homeless encampment — recently removed by the city of Seattle — and division among neighbors about how best to ensure the community's survival in an [increasingly affluent Seattle](#).

The garbage pileup, as well as rent increases and the encampment, are flashpoints. The park also sits on a [former landfill](#), and residents have complained that their homes are sinking into the unstable ground.

While most Halcyon residents own their homes and cover any maintenance costs themselves, they still have to pay rent for their slabs, which includes water service and the twice-weekly garbage pickup. Many are on fixed incomes with only Social Security payments for support, and Halcyon is one of the last affordable places in Seattle for them to live.

A new ownership group, Halcyon MHP LLC, and property management company Bridgeview Management took over Halcyon in December 2019, according to [property records](#). Bridgeview Property Management did not respond to multiple calls and emails seeking comment.

Dominique Chandler, 65, has lived at Halcyon for seven years. Until recently, it was a place she could afford on her \$1,500 monthly Social Security income. In the past two years, she said, her rent jumped from \$550 to around \$975. She often skimps on food to pay her bills and feed her cat, Leo.

Her neighbor, Steve Stevenson, said rent used to increase about \$50 a year. This year, his rent went up \$200. He's able to afford it for now with both his Social Security benefits and union pension. But he suspects rent could keep going up until everyone in the park is paying the \$1,250 list price on the [management company's website](#).

"When I moved in here, there wasn't an empty house here," he said. "All of a sudden we have 20-some empty spaces, and there'll be 76 empty spaces if they keep jacking up the rent."

Stevenson said he plans to take management to court and sue for lower rent since the company hasn't given him a new lease.

Eloise Mickelsen, 77, a Halcyon resident and former president of the homeowners association, said the residents who left those vacancies took buyouts from Bridgeview when the company took over the park.

Around noon on Thursday, Terry Tautolo drove his Waste Management truck under a low-hanging power line that had prevented other drivers from using the back entrance of the park. Residents gave him a hero's welcome.

Tautolo doesn't usually drive this route, and his truck barely cleared the line. Neighbors like Rod McCord, a 19-year resident of the park, cheered and rushed to get the bags of trash they'd been storing on their porches for days. Chandler gave Tautolo a high-five and thanked him profusely.

Mickelsen wishes her neighbors would have some patience and work closer with management. Mickelsen spearheaded the 2019 campaign to save the park when she was HOA president, but since her term expired in 2020, she's put her head down and tried to quietly make progress for her community.

	<p>Mickelsen said she worked for months trying to get the city to clean up the neighboring homeless encampment, which crews finished up on Wednesday. She says she told her neighbors that she'd called the city to arrange garbage collection on Thursday afternoon.</p> <p>"All I want is that we cooperate, work together with management for the betterment of the community," Mickelsen said. "I don't want to further encourage negativity and division."</p>
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## Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Coast Guard: maritime incidents up 68%</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/featured/maritime-cyber-incidents-increased-at-least-68-percent-in-2021-coast-guard-reports/">https://www.hstoday.us/featured/maritime-cyber-incidents-increased-at-least-68-percent-in-2021-coast-guard-reports/</a>
GIST	<p>A new U.S. Coast Guard Cyber Command report on cybersecurity trends in the maritime environment said the significance of cyber hygiene, detection, and response "grew exponentially" last year due to a 68 percent increase in reported maritime cyber incidents and USCG efforts to ensure maritime facilities are complying with cyber regulations.</p> <p>A cyber attack on the port environment can compromise physical facility access control systems, manipulate terminal and gate operating systems for the purpose of leaking sensitive supply chain data or facilitating smuggling or cargo theft, stop port operations by compromising the terminal headquarters, compromise operational technology systems such as cranes in a way that leads to loss of life or property, tamper with PNT so that vessels cannot safely navigate a port, and compromise shipboard systems with impacts to safety or cargo.</p> <p>U.S. Coast Guard Cyber Command's (CGCYBER) first Cyber Protection Team — deployable special forces that assess threats and vulnerabilities, identify the presence of adversaries on networks and systems, and respond to cyber incidents — attained full operational capability in May 2021, with the second team following in November 2021. CGCYBER's Maritime Cyber Readiness Branch, tasked with translating "cybersecurity details into measurable operational risk," investigated 47 cybersecurity incidents in 2021 "including several large-scale incidents affecting multiple organizations at once."</p> <p>"Though the number of reported incidents has increased 68% from 2020 (28 total incidents), MCRB believes many other incidents go undetected or unreported," the report notes.</p> <p>The maritime environment incidents reported to the Coast Guard in 2021 included phishing at sectors Guam, Columbia River, Los Angeles/Long Beach, Corpus Christi, Houston/Galveston, Mobile, Charleston, Maryland/NCR, New York, and New England, as well as MSU Port Arthur. Ransomware was reported at sectors Columbia River, Los Angeles/Long Beach, New Orleans, Virginia, Delaware Bay, Maryland/NCR, Long Island Sound, and New England. Sector Puget Sound reported an incident related to authorized access, while Columbia River reported a suspected snitch device. Sector Delaware Bay reported an AIS spoof.</p> <p>"Cyber-criminals are now using more advanced tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) including focused ransomware attacks in multi-extortion style campaigns with hopes of ensuring a higher, more guaranteed payout," the report said. "Rather than hitting a broad range of targets, cyber criminals have evolved to focus ransomware attacks on higher value targets."</p> <p>The three most popular ransomware-as-a-service variants targeting the maritime transportation system in 2021 were Maze, Sodinokibi, and Ryuk.</p> <p>"Nation state malicious cyber actors (MCAs) typically abuse zero-day vulnerabilities and known exploitations," the report continued. "Zero-day vulnerabilities are vulnerabilities disclosed or discovered</p>

without an available patch or update to remediate the vulnerability. MCAs often use zero-day vulnerabilities in their initial attack vector to avoid detection. Nation state MCAs abuse Virtual Private Servers (VPS) and web shells to avoid detection and circumvent host system security in order to gain access to the victim networks. MCAs use these techniques within the MTS to increase the probability of successfully exploiting an intended victim.”

Phishing, of which industries within the maritime environment such as logistics and shipping saw “slight increases” last year, “remained the most prevalent means by which MCAs delivered malicious code” in 2021, and both nation-state actors and cyber criminals “will very likely continue to use phishing emails to gain initial access to victim networks.”

As of last October, Maritime Transportation Security Act-regulated facilities are under requirements to address cyber vulnerabilities. “This policy brought with it new cyber competency expectations for industry facility security officers and Coast Guard facility inspectors,” the report noted. “Coast Guard facility inspectors will review cybersecurity plans submitted by facilities. They will also incorporate cybersecurity reviews when conducting security inspections.”

Maritime transportation system partners “fully remediated two-thirds of all exploitable findings on publicly facing systems and 45% of all internally exploitable findings within six months of a CPT Assess mission,” USCG said. “They also partially remediated an additional one-sixth of publicly facing and 43% of internally accessible findings within this 6-month window.”

Out of publicly exploitable findings, 14 had been fully mitigated as of the six-month follow-up, two had accepted the risk of the finding, three were false positives, and three had taken no action to date. Out of internally exploitable findings, 53 had been fully mitigated at the six-month check-in time, 46 had been partially mitigated, five accepted the risk of the findings, and eight had taken no action to date.

Common findings included credentials that were easy to guess — including passwords of “admin,” “PASSWORD,” or “1234” — or easy to crack, such as “123456,” “password1,” “abc123,” or “iloveyou.” Other issues included weak password policies, use of open mail relay servers, poor patch management, outdated operating systems or applications that did not support updates, elevated service account privileges, and non-essential use of elevated access.

CGCYBER mitigation recommendations to vulnerable entities included changes in password policies, privileged account management, network segmentation, multifactor authentication, vulnerability scanning, software updates, user training, and disabling or removing a feature or program.

The report noted the most user resistance — even though it carried the lowest cost of the mitigations — was seen with the recommendation to change password policies to require more length and complexity.

“Despite widespread frustration with the use of passwords from both a usability and security standpoint, they remain a very widely used form of authentication,” the report stated. “Humans, however, have only a limited ability to memorize complex, arbitrary secrets, so they often choose easily guessed passwords.”

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HEADLINE	08/26 Ransomware attacks on the rise
SOURCE	<a href="https://threatpost.com/ransomware-attacks-are-on-the-rise/180481/">https://threatpost.com/ransomware-attacks-are-on-the-rise/180481/</a>
GIST	<p>After a recent dip, ransomware attacks are back on the rise. According to <a href="#">data</a> released by NCC Group, the resurgence is being led by old ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) groups.</p> <p>With data gathered by “actively monitoring the leak sites used by each ransomware group and scraping victim details as they are released,” researchers have determined that Lockbit was by far the most prolific ransomware gang in July, behind 62 attacks. That’s ten more than the month prior, and more than twice as many as the second and third most prolific groups combined. “Lockbit 3.0 maintain their foothold as the</p>



most threatening ransomware group,” the authors wrote, “and one with which all organizations should aim to be aware of.”

Those second and third most prolific groups are Hiveleaks – 27 attacks – and BlackBasta – 24 attacks. These figures represent rapid rises for each group – since June, a 440 percent rise for Hiveleaks, and a 50 percent rise for BlackBasta.

It may well be that the resurgence in ransomware attacks, and the rise of these two particular groups, are intimately connected.

### **Why Ransomware Has Bounced**

Researchers from NCC Group counted 198 successful ransomware campaigns in July – up 47 percent from June. Sharp as that incline may be, it still falls some ways short of the high-water mark set this Spring, with nearly 300 such campaigns in both March and April.

### **Why the Flux?**

Well, in May, the United States government ramped up its efforts against Russian cybercrime by [offering](#) up to \$15 million for prized information about Conti, then the world’s foremost ransomware gang. “It is likely that the threat actors that were undergoing structural changes,” the authors of the report speculated, “and have begun settling into their new modes of operating, resulting in their total compromises increasing in conjunction.”

Hiveleaks and BlackBasta are the result of that restructuring. Both groups are “associated with Conti,” the authors noted, Hiveleaks as an affiliate and BlackBasta as a replacement strain. “As such, it appears that it has not taken long for Conti’s presence to filter back into the threat landscape, albeit under a new identity.”

Now that Conti’s properly split in two, the authors speculated, “it would not be surprising to see these figures further increase as we move into August.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 NATO probes gang selling classified data</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hackread.com/nato-hackers-selling-data-missile-firm-mbda/">https://www.hackread.com/nato-hackers-selling-data-missile-firm-mbda/</a>
GIST	<p>A cybercrime gang is selling classified data apparently stolen from European firm MBDA Missile Systems. For your information, <a href="#">MBDA</a> is a European company that produces missiles and other weapons. It was formed in 2001 from a merger of French, Italian, and British companies. MBDA is the world’s second-largest missile maker after <a href="#">Boeing</a>.</p> <p>The company has three main product lines: air-to-air missiles, air-to-surface missiles, and surface-to-air missiles. Its products are used by the militaries of more than 40 countries.</p> <p>MBDA’s headquarters are in Paris, France. The company has manufacturing plants in France, Italy, Britain, and Spain. It employs over 13,000 people.</p> <p><b>Missile Data on Sale for Bitcoin</b></p> <p>Unidentified hackers claim that they have classified military data obtained from MBDA after a successful data breach. As seen by Hackread.com, initially, cybercriminals operating on Russian and English hacker forums were selling approx. 80 GB of stolen data for 15 BTC (around \$294,000).</p> <p>However, on August 19th, 2022, the group dropped the price to 1 BTC (\$19,000) for 70 GB worth of data.</p> <p>On the other hand, as <a href="#">reported</a> by BBC, MBDA has admitted that some of its data were hacked after compromising an external hard drive.</p> <p><b>NATO to Probe the Breach</b></p>

NATO has launched a probe into selling top-secret weapon and missile data files online. MBDA is cooperating with investigating authorities in Italy, as that's where the data breach occurred. The probe focuses on one of the company's suppliers. It is worth noting that NATO is among [MBDA's clients](#).

"We are assessing claims relating to data allegedly stolen from MBDA," a NATO representative told media outlets on Friday, adding that there wasn't any confirmation that any NATO network was compromised. The organization stated that it had implemented all necessary measures for the safety of its networks.

#### **MBDA's Stance**

The company insists that this data breach occurred several weeks back and that the stolen data is not classified or sensitive. MBDA refuted the hacker group's claims that they are selling classified military data.

"No hacking of our secure networks has occurred. MBDA can confirm that there is no protectively marked data from MBDA involved," the company explained on Friday.

MBDA further explained that it refused to yield to the hackers' ransom demands, which is why they are spreading misinformation on the internet to force the company to pay the ransom. However, the company won't give in and vowed to take all legal actions against the blackmailers.

#### **Breached Data Details**

The data, according to samples leaked by hackers, includes weapons blueprints of the France-headquartered MBDA Missile Systems used in the Ukraine war by NATO allies.

Reportedly, the MBDA documents on sale online specify details of the year 2020 "communication intelligence operation" carried out by a US air regiment over Estonia in the Baltics. However, Hackread.com could not verify it.

The leaked sample also shows that the alleged MBDA data includes the mission commander's coordinates, full name, and contact numbers. Furthermore, Hackread.com also checked some of the files labeled "NATO Confidential," "NATO Restricted," "Unclassified Controlled Information," and "NATO Secret."

For your information, there are four security classification categories at NATO- NATO Restricted, NATO Confidential, NATO Secret, and Cosmic Top Secret. The fourth category, Cosmic Top Secret, is the highest among all and is assigned to highly-sensitive, confidential files owned by the military alliance.

The data was still up for sale at the time of writing.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 LockBit gang triple-extortion tactic</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/lockbit-ransomware-gang-gets-aggressive-with-triple-extortion-tactic/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/lockbit-ransomware-gang-gets-aggressive-with-triple-extortion-tactic/</a>
GIST	<p>LockBit ransomware gang announced that it is improving defenses against distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks and working to take the operation to triple extortion level.</p> <p>The gang has recently suffered a DDoS attack, allegedly on behalf of digital security giant Entrust, that prevented access to data published on its corporate leaks site.</p> <p>Data from Entrust was stolen by LockBit ransomware in an attack on June 18, according to a BleepingComputer source. The <a href="#">company confirmed the incident</a> and that data had been stolen.</p> <p>Entrust did not pay the ransom and LockBit <a href="#">announced</a> that it would publish all the stolen data on August 19. This did not happen, though, because the gang's leak site was hit by a <a href="#">DDoS attack believed to be connected to Entrust</a>.</p>

### **LockBit getting into DDoS**

Earlier this week, LockBitSupp, the public-facing figure of the LockBit ransomware operation, announced that the group is back in business with a larger infrastructure to give access to leaks unfazed by DDoS attacks.

The DDoS attack last weekend that put a temporary stop to leaking Entrust data was seen as an opportunity to explore the triple extortion tactic to apply more pressure on victims to pay a ransom.

LockBitSupp said that the ransomware operator is now looking to add DDoS as an extortion tactic on top of encrypting data and leaking it.

“I am looking for dudoser [DDoSers] in the team, most likely now we will attack targets and provide triple extortion, encryption + data leak + dudoser, because I have felt the power of dudoser and how it invigorates and makes life more interesting,” LockBitSupp wrote in a post on a hacker forum.

### **Leaking Entrust data**

The gang also promised to share over torrent 300GB of data stolen from Entrust so “the whole world will know your secrets.”

LockBit’s spokesperson said that they would share the Entrust data leak privately with anyone that contacts them before making it available over torrent.

It appears that LockBit has kept its promise and released this weekend a torrent called “entrust.com” with 343GB of files.

The operators wanted to make sure that Entrust’s data is available from multiple sources and, besides publishing it on their site, they also shared the torrent over at least two file storage services, with one of them no longer making it available.

### **DDoS defenses**

One method already implemented to prevent further DDoS attacks is to use unique links in the ransom notes for the victims.

“The function of randomization of links in the notes of the locker has already been implemented, each build of the locker will have a unique link that the dudoser [DDoSer] will not be able to recognize,” LockBitSupp posted.

They also announced an increase in the number of mirrors and duplicate servers, and a plan to increase the availability of stolen data by making it accessible over clearnet, too, via a bulletproof storage service.

LockBit ransomware operation has been active for almost three years, since September 2019. At the time of writing, LockBit’s data leak site is up and running.

The gang is listing more than 700 victims and Entrust is one of them, with data for the company leaked on August 27.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 Govts embrace internet shutdowns: control</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/aug/29/flicking-the-kill-switch-governments-embrace-internet-shutdowns-as-a-form-of-control">https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/aug/29/flicking-the-kill-switch-governments-embrace-internet-shutdowns-as-a-form-of-control</a>
GIST	On 1 February 2021, reporter Ko Zin Lin Htet received a panicked phone call from a source in the Burmese capital, Yangon. The caller said the military had seized power and was arresting opposition politicians, then hung up. Ko Zin Lin Htet remembered what he did next: “I checked my phone and my internet connection. There was nothing there.”

He got on his motorbike and drove to the parliament, where he saw military personnel, not police, guarding the buildings. At that moment, Ko Zin Lin Htet realised there had been a coup – and that [by cutting internet access](#), the new junta had thrown the country back into the pre-internet era.

For months the military had been questioning the results of the November 2020 election, won in a landslide by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. [The coup took place](#) on the day the new parliament was due to be sworn in.

In the early hours of the morning, the junta had sent soldiers to the country's internet providers to force engineers to shut down connections to the outside world. It was the first stage of a digital coup designed to exert control over communications by slowing and strategically shutting off the internet.

Nathan Maung was another Burmese journalist who recalls the confusion and disbelief on the day of the military takeover. "The internet was out." He looked for his most recent texts – "The last messages from my friends said, 'Shit happened'. I have no clue what shit happened."

The whole country had been plunged into an information black hole.

### **'Cloak of darkness'**

From [Ukraine](#) to Myanmar, government-run internet outages are picking up pace around the world. In 2021, there were 182 shutdowns in 34 countries, according to Access Now, a non-government organisation that tracks connectivity around the world. Countries across Africa and Asia have turned to shutdowns in a bid to control behaviour, while India, largely in the conflict-ridden region of Jammu and Kashmir, plunged into digital darkness more times than any other last year.

The increasing use of the kill switch underlines a deepening global trend towards digital authoritarianism, as governments use access to the internet as a weapon against their own people. [Internet](#) shutdowns have also become a modern canary in the coalmine.

"The internet going off is well known in many countries to be a sign or a signal that something bad is about to happen," says Simon Angus, an economist from Monash University whose Monash Internet Observatory tracks global internet connectivity in real time. "That seems to be aligned closely with human rights abuses because it really is a cloak of darkness."

The shutdowns disconnect emergency workers and hospitals and paralyse financial systems, yet governments are using them with ever more frequency. Figures from Access Now show outages increased globally 15% in 2021, compared to the year before. Such outages cause immense economic damage – an estimated \$5.5bn last year – but go largely unnoticed by the outside world, because information flows in and out of the affected countries have been severed.

The UN Human Rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, in June condemned internet shutdowns: "Switching off the internet causes incalculable damage, both in material and human rights terms."

### **'There's no freedom'**

In Ukraine, that cloak of darkness fell one hour before [Russia's invasion in February](#), when a massive state-sponsored cyber-attack on a key satellite internet network knocked tens of thousands of Ukrainian modems offline, while Sudan severed the internet [after its military coup](#). Civil unrest in Ethiopia and Kazakhstan has triggered internet shutdowns as governments try to prevent political mobilisation and stop news about military suppression from emerging.

Yet experts say [Myanmar](#) has enforced the sharpest restrictions on internet freedom on record.

"Every different style of outage was reflected in the first few weeks [of the coup]," says Doug Madory of Kentik internet monitoring platform.

After sporadic daylong shutdowns in mid-February, the junta began shutting off the internet every night, an act that continued with metronomic regularity for three months. Under the cover of digital darkness, they carried out nightly raids, smashing down doors to drag out high-profile politicians, activists and celebrities. The raids had a profound psychological toll.

“I used to chat with my friends late at night,” says one woman from Yangon. “As I am approached every night, that feeling of frustration would start building. It felt like they controlled everything. There’s no freedom.”

The nightly shutdowns became “a form of terror”, according to Angus. “It becomes a psychological rhythm and marker that people have to endure. It sends a signal as well. It says: ‘We’re still in control.’” The period of nightly outages was followed by a complete nationwide shutdown for 73 days.

### **Impact of shutdowns**

Internet shutdowns are not just used by governments facing civil unrest. Every year millions of internet users from Sudan to Syria, Jordan to India also lose internet access during exam season as governments pull the plug in a bid to avoid hi-tech cheating.

For the past five years, 21-year-old trainee doctor Aya Hich has been forced to sit her medical exams in Algeria without access to the internet. That’s because every year the government severs the internet for five days to ensure that high school students do not cheat on their baccalaureate exams.

“It is always frustrating year after year that we have to be cut off from the rest of the world,” Hich says.

The economic costs – and other less obvious impacts – of shutdowns radiate across industries. Sudanese architect Tagreed Ahdin remembers the difficulties of surviving for a month with no online banking when the new military junta shut down the internet in 2021. “We raided the kids’ wallets and pooled everything,” she says. But one of the biggest issues was simply staying cool in the 40-degree heat, when the apps selling electricity no longer functioned.

“Our first panic moment came when we realised we couldn’t buy electricity,” she says. “We were shutting down everything all over the house, while the kids begged for air conditioning. It was so hot.”

India leads total shutdowns globally. In 2021, the world’s largest democracy shut off its internet 106 times – more than the rest of the world combined. Hardest-hit was the conflict-ridden region of Jammu and Kashmir, which was [subject to 85 shutdowns](#) under the guise of containing separatist violence. The blackouts shut down Zoom classes for students, stopped doctors from communicating with their remote patients and crippled the banking system, causing mortgage holders to default on their loans. Apple crops rotted before they could be sold and businesses were paralysed.

“We didn’t have anything to do. We weren’t even able to watch television,” says Sajid Yusuf Shah, a criminal lawyer turned media entrepreneur. “I was in a depression at that time. We feel helpless, we feel isolated, we feel handicapped.”

India’s high level of shutdowns highlights a concerning trend, says David Kaye, a law professor at the University of California Irvine and a former UN special rapporteur for freedom of expression.

“One way of thinking about how bad it is [is] to see how it’s spread from places like Tajikistan or Togo or southern Cameroon, where rule of law is already pretty spotty, to a place like India.

“It’s migrated into a toolbox for governments that actually do have the rule of law.”

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HEADLINE	08/27 Montenegro: Russian cyberattack on govt.
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.securityweek.com/montenegro-reports-massive-russian-cyberattack-against-govt">https://www.securityweek.com/montenegro-reports-massive-russian-cyberattack-against-govt</a>

GIST	<p><b>Montenegro's security agency warned Friday that hackers from Russia have launched a massive, coordinated cyberattack against the small nation's government and its services.</b></p> <p>The Agency for National Security, or ANB, said Montenegro is “under a hybrid war at the moment.”</p> <p>The Adriatic Sea state, once considered a strong Russian ally, in 2017 joined NATO despite strong opposition from Moscow. It has also joined Western sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>In addition to most European countries, Russia has added Montenegro to its list of “enemy states” for acting against Kremlin’s interests.</p> <p>The Montenegrin government earlier this week reported first in series of cyberattacks on its servers, but said it managed to prevent any damage. However, the attack seems to be ongoing.</p> <p>“Coordinated Russian services are behind the cyber attack,” the ANB said in a statement. “This kind of attack was carried out for the first time in Montenegro and it has been prepared for a long period of time.”</p> <p>Dusan Polovic, a government official, said “I can say with certainty that this attack that Montenegro is experiencing these days comes directly from Russia.”</p> <p>The U.S. embassy in Montenegro warned its citizens in the Balkan state to be aware of a “persistent and ongoing cyberattack that is in process.”</p> <p>“The attack may include disruptions to the public utility, transportation (including border crossings and airport), and telecommunication sectors,” it said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 CISA: prepare now for quantum computers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/cisa-prepare-now-for-quantum-computers-not-when-hackers-use-them/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/cisa-prepare-now-for-quantum-computers-not-when-hackers-use-them/</a>
GIST	<p>Although quantum computing is not commercially available, CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) urges organizations to prepare for the dawn of this new age, which is expected to bring groundbreaking changes in cryptography, and how we protect our secrets.</p> <p>The agency published a paper earlier in the week, calling for leaders to start preparing for the migration to stronger secret guarding systems, exploring risk mitigation methods, and participating in developing new standards.</p> <p><b>Race to Quantum supremacy</b></p> <p>Quantum computers are systems that harness quantum mechanics to perform much more powerful computations than are available today on systems that rely on binary (0, 1) computations.</p> <p>Experts in the field widely accept that the currently experimental quantum computers will <a href="#">achieve superiority</a> over conventional systems <a href="#">by the end of the decade</a> and will quickly render them obsolete with subsequent capability leaps.</p> <p>This is expected to revolutionize research, solve long-standing mathematical problems, perform higher-level physics simulations, and accelerate the development of artificial intelligence models.</p> <p>The main negative implication of this quantum computing concerns the cryptography of secrets, a fundamental element of information security.</p> <p>Cryptographic schemes that are today considered secure will be cracked in mere seconds by quantum computers, leaving persons, companies, and entire countries powerless against the computing supremacy of their adversaries.</p>



“When quantum computers reach higher levels of computing power and speed, they will be capable of breaking public key cryptography, threatening the security of business transactions, secure communications, digital signatures, and customer information,” [explains CISA](#).

This could threaten data in transit relating to top-secret communications, banking operations, military operations, government meetings, critical industrial processes, and more.

Yesterday, China's Baidu [introduced “Qian Shi,”](#) an industry-level quantum supercomputer capable of achieving stable performance at 10 quantum bits of power.

Baidu also stated that it recently completed the design of a 36-qubit superconducting quantum chip with couplers, which threatens to surpass the strength of the leading American quantum machine, IonQ Aria, which [tops at 20 qubits](#).

Other companies in the race for quantum supremacy are Intel, IBM, Microsoft, IBM, and Google, all competing to advance the field.

### Preparing for the new age

Research into quantum-secure encryption algorithms is already underway, and NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) plans to publish official guidelines on the topic by the end of 2024.

Until then, CISA recommends that all stakeholders follow the “[post-quantum cryptography roadmap](#)”, which can be summarized in the following:

- CEOs should increase their engagement with post-quantum standards developing organizations.
- Organizations should inventory the most sensitive and critical datasets that must be secured for an extended amount of time.
- Organizations should conduct an inventory of all the systems using cryptographic technologies for any function to facilitate a smooth transition in the future.
- Cybersecurity officials within organizations should identify acquisition, cybersecurity, and data security standards that will require updating to reflect post-quantum requirements.
- Organizations should identify where and for what purpose public key cryptography is being used and mark those systems as quantum vulnerable.
- Prioritize one system over another for cryptographic transition based on the organization’s functions, goals, and needs.
- Using the inventory and prioritization information, organizations should develop a plan for systems transitions upon publication of the new post-quantum cryptographic standard.

“Do not wait until the quantum computers are in use by our adversaries to act. Early preparations will ensure a smooth migration to the post-quantum cryptography standard once it is available,” concludes the agency.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Iranian attackers target Israel organizations</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.zdnet.com/article/microsoft-iranian-attackers-using-log4shell-to-attack-organizations-in-israel/#ftag=RSSbaffb68?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.zdnet.com/article/microsoft-iranian-attackers-using-log4shell-to-attack-organizations-in-israel/#ftag=RSSbaffb68?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Microsoft has warned that an Iranian state-based threat actor it calls Mercury is using the Log4Shell flaws in applications from IT vendor <a href="#">SysAid</a> against organizations located in Israel.</p> <p>Microsoft's nation-state tracking team, <a href="#">Microsoft Threat Intelligence Center (MSTIC)</a>, has assessed with "high confidence" that the campaign is affiliated with Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). US Cyber Command <a href="#">tracks the group as MuddyWater</a>, which it assesses is a "subordinate element" of MOIS.</p> <p>Targeting SysAid apps is a new approach for Mercury, which in the past has used <a href="#">Log4Shell remote code execution flaws in VMware apps</a> to carry out attacks.</p>

SysAid is an IT services management firm founded in Israel. The company rolled out [Log4j patches for its cloud and on-premises products](#) in January, shortly after the Apache Software Foundation disclosed the bugs in the Log4J Java app logging library on December 9.

"In recent weeks, the Microsoft Threat Intelligence Center (MSTIC) and Microsoft 365 Defender Research Team detected Iran-based threat actor MERCURY leveraging exploitation of [Log4j 2 vulnerabilities](#) in [SysAid](#) applications against organizations all located in Israel," [Microsoft warned](#).

Microsoft observed the group using what were "most likely" Log4Shell exploits between July 23 and 25 against SysAid Server instances exposed to the internet. The campaign is occurring to the backdrop of US, Iran and Israel [negotiating a new nuclear deal](#).

"After gaining access, MERCURY establishes persistence, dumps credentials, and moves laterally within the targeted organization using both custom and well-known hacking tools, as well as built-in operating system tools for its hands-on-keyboard attack," Microsoft explained.

The group is dropping and using web shells to execute commands related to reconnaissance, lateral movement and persistence. It's also using the open-source pen-testing tool Mimikatz to dump and steal credentials, as well as dumping credentials in SQL servers to steal high-privilege service accounts.

While the threat appears to be targeted exclusively at organizations based in Israel, Microsoft is urging all organizations to check whether SysAid is present on the network and apply the firm's patches for the Log4j flaws.

Previously, US Cyber Command has found [MOIS using known vulnerabilities to carry out attacks](#). Throughout 2021, Iranian threat actors were using flaws in Fortinet gear and the Microsoft Exchange Server ProxyShell bugs to gain initial access in targets.

The US Cyber Safety Review Board (CSRB), in [July deemed Log4Shell an "endemic" vulnerability](#) that it expects to affect systems until at least 2032. Part of Log4Shell's problem was that the Log4j component is used in so many different applications, and discovering which of them are affected remains a challenge.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) estimated hundreds of millions of internet-facing devices were vulnerable to Log4Shell.

Microsoft recommends that security teams review all authentication activity for remote access infrastructure and focus on accounts configured that have not been protected with multi-factor authentication (MFA). It also recommends that organizations enable MFA.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Companies in Twilio hack keep growing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2022/08/the-number-of-companies-caught-up-in-the-twilio-hack-keeps-growing/?web_view=true">https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2022/08/the-number-of-companies-caught-up-in-the-twilio-hack-keeps-growing/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>In recent weeks, security provider Twilio <a href="#">revealed</a> it was breached by well resourced phishers, who used their access to steal data from 163 of its customers. Security firm Group-IB, meanwhile <a href="#">said</a> that the same phishers who hit Twilio breached at least 136 companies in similar advanced attacks.</p> <p>Three companies -- Twilio-owned Authy, password manager LastPass, and food delivery network DoorDash in recent days have all disclosed data breaches that appear to be related to the same activity. Authentication service <a href="#">Okta</a> and secure messenger provider <a href="#">Signal</a>, both recently said their data was accessed as a result of the Twilio breach.</p> <p>Group-IB <a href="#">said on Thursday</a> that at least 136 companies were phished by the same threat actor as Twilio. DoorDash is one of them, a company representative <a href="#">has told</a> TechCrunch.</p>

### Uncommonly resourceful

The compromises of Authy and LastPass are the most concerning of the new revelations. Authy says it stores two-factor authentication tokens for 75 million users. Given the passwords the threat actor has already obtained in previous breaches, these tokens may have been the only things preventing the takeover of more accounts. Authy said that the threat actor used its access to log in to only 93 individual accounts and enroll new devices that could receive one-time passwords. Depending on who those accounts belong to, that could be very bad. Authy said it has since removed unauthorized devices from those accounts.

LastPass said a threat actor gained unauthorized access through a single compromised developer account to portions of the password manager's development environment. From there, the threat actor "took portions of source code and some proprietary LastPass technical information." LastPass said that master passwords, encrypted passwords and other data stored in customer accounts, and customers' personal information weren't affected. While the LastPass data known to be obtained isn't especially sensitive, any breach involving a major password management provider is serious, given the wealth of data it stores.

DoorDash also [said](#) that an undisclosed number of customers had their names, email addresses, delivery addresses, phone numbers, and partial payment card numbers stolen by the same threat actor, which some are calling Scatter Swine. The threat actor obtained names, phone numbers, and email addresses from an undisclosed number of DoorDash contractors.

As [already reported](#), the initial phishing attack on Twilio was well-planned and executed with surgical precision. The threat actors had private phone numbers of employees, more than 169 counterfeit domains mimicking Okta and other security providers, and the ability to bypass 2FA protections that used one-time passwords.

The threat actor's ability to leverage data obtained in one breach to wage supply-chain attacks against the victims' customers—and its ability to remain undetected since March—demonstrates its resourcefulness and skill. It's not uncommon for companies that announce breaches to update their disclosures in the days or weeks following to include additional information that was compromised. It won't be surprising if one or more victims here do the same.

If there's a lesson in this whole mess, it's that not all 2FA is equal. One-time passwords sent by SMS or generated by authenticator apps are as phishable as passwords are, and that's what allowed the threat actors to bypass this last form of defense against account takeovers.

One company that was targeted but didn't fall victim was Cloudflare. The reason: Cloudflare employees relied on 2FA that used physical keys such as Yubikeys, which along with other FIDO2 compliant forms of 2FA, can't be phished. Companies spouting the tired mantra that they take security seriously shouldn't be taken seriously unless phishing-resistant 2FA is a staple of their digital hygiene.

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HEADLINE	08/26 DoorDash discloses new data breach
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/doordash-discloses-new-data-breach-tied-to-twilio-hackers/?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/doordash-discloses-new-data-breach-tied-to-twilio-hackers/?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Food delivery firm DoorDash has disclosed a data breach exposing customer and employee data that is linked to the recent cyberattack on Twilio.</p> <p>In a security advisory released Thursday afternoon, DoorDash says that a threat actor gained access to the company's internal tools using stolen credentials from a third-party vendor that had access to their systems.</p> <p>"DoorDash recently detected unusual and suspicious activity from a third-party vendor's computer network. In response, we swiftly disabled the vendor's access to our system and contained the incident," explains the DoorDash security notice.</p>

The hacker used this access to DoorDash's internal tools to access data for both consumers and employees. The exposed information includes the names, email addresses, delivery addresses, and phone numbers of consumers. In addition, for a small subset of customers, the hackers accessed basic order information and partial credit card information, including the card type and the last four digits of the card number.

For employees of the company, known as Dashers, the hackers may have accessed names, phone numbers, and email addresses.

While DoorDash does not mention the name of the third-party vendor, the food delivery company [told TechCrunch](#) that the breach is linked to same threat actors as the recent cyberattack on Twilio.

DoorDash previously [suffered a data breach in 2019](#) that exposed the data of nearly 5 million customers.

### **Part of a larger 'Oktapus' phishing campaign**

Earlier this month, [Twilio disclosed that they were breached](#) after multiple employees fell for an SMS phishing attack that allowed threat actors to access internal systems.

Using this access, the threat actors could access the data of 163 Twilio customers and use that data in further supply-chain attacks.

"To date, our investigation has identified 163 Twilio customers - out of a total customer base of over 270,000 - whose data was accessed without authorization for a limited period of time, and we have notified all of them," explains an updated Twilio [security advisory](#).

The fallout from this attack is just being realized, with Twilio disclosing this week that the [hackers were also able to access 93 Authy 2FA accounts](#) as part of the breach.

[Signal also disclosed](#) that the breach allowed hackers to access the phone numbers of 1,900 users, with some accounts reregistered to new devices.

However, the attack on Twilio is part of a much [larger phishing campaign dubbed 'Oktapus'](#) after the threat actor's targeting of Okta identity management login credentials.

The campaign was discovered by cybersecurity firm Group-IB, which said that the threat actors breached over 130 organizations worldwide using an SMS phishing campaign.

These SMS phishing texts utilized phishing domains containing the keywords "OKTA," "HELP," "VPN," and "SSO" and told targets to click on a link to update their password or access other information.

These attacks were very successful, leading to reported data breaches at [MailChimp](#) and [Klaviyo](#) and an [attempted breach of Cloudflare](#).

Other companies targeted in the attack include Coinbase, KuCoin, Binance, Microsoft, Telus, Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile, AT&T, Sprint, Rogers, Mailgun, Slack, Box, SendGrid, Yahoo, Sykes, BestBuy, and Infosys.

However, none of these other companies have disclosed whether the attacks were successful.

*8/26/22 update: Story updated to clarify that the DoorDash breach was conducted by the same hackers as Twilio but not through Twilio*

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HEADLINE	08/29 Year after US pullout, Kabul in despair
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-08-29/kabul-afghanistan-one-year-taliban-takeover">https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-08-29/kabul-afghanistan-one-year-taliban-takeover</a>
GIST	<p>KABUL — Standing on the side of a mud-crusted street by a sewage canal, Shafiullah heaved a 110-pound bag of flour into the trunk of his battered Toyota Corolla and sighed. Beside him, a shambolic queue of residents of this once-affluent neighborhood, all waiting for their monthly U.N.-supplied assistance package, stretched to the end of the block and around two corners, then wrapped around the corner twice more, a physical representation of the five-hour wait Shafiullah had just finished.</p> <p>“This is like begging. Sometimes you wait all day for this bag of flour,” the former member of Afghanistan’s <a href="#">vanquished U.S.-backed army</a> said bitterly. The aid package will last him, his wife, his sister and his mother for a month, he said; after that, he doesn’t know what he’ll do.</p> <p>“Before, I made enough money I could help other poor people,” said Shafiullah, 27, who gave only his first name for privacy reasons. “Now I’m the one who needs help.”</p> <p>On the other side of Kabul, past dilapidated houses and drug addicts clustered in a graveyard, worshipers held their collective breath as they met for Friday prayers on the upper floor of the Abu Bakr Al-Siddique Mosque. Praying downstairs was impossible: Days earlier, an <a href="#">Islamic State bomb ripped through the ground floor</a> with enough strength to blow out the door and shatter the windows of nearby houses, killing 21 people.</p> <p>Now, the congregants pray under the watchful eyes of eight Kalashnikov-toting Taliban fighters, with a Humvee and machine-gun-equipped truck nearby for extra security.</p> <p>A year after the Taliban’s stunningly swift takeover and the U.S.-backed government’s disintegration, Kabul, the Afghan capital, is a city bereft. Of economic spark, as jobs vanish, shops and restaurants shut and an ever-increasing number of beggars camp outside bakeries hoping for a morsel of bread. Of safety, as destitution fuels a crime wave even as terrorist attacks — though reduced — continue to kill and maim. Of opportunity, especially for women and girls. Of hope.</p> <p>The slashing of foreign aid, along with U.S. sanctions and the seizure of the Afghan central bank’s assets, has shrunk the nation’s economy by a third, plunging all but 3% of Afghanistan’s 40 million people <a href="#">below the poverty line</a>, aid groups say. Despite relief that the 20-year war between the Taliban and occupying Western forces has ended — especially in the countryside, where the fight was at its most intense — the unanimous complaint among Kabul residents, even those inclined to think well of the Taliban, is that there is no money and no prospects for meaningful employment.</p> <p>They refer to the Afghan republic’s destruction as the “<i>suqoot</i>,” the fall, less with rage at the betrayal by their former leaders — though there is that — than with the resignation of a people who believe they’ve missed their chance. They express frustration that their new rulers in the now-renamed Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan refuse to take any steps to unblock the international restrictions that have <a href="#">paralyzed the financial system</a> and all but eviscerated the economy.</p> <p>There’s a palpable sense among many Kabulis of giving up on their country. Conversations inevitably turn to ways to get out.</p> <p>“I can’t go to university for the work I want to do. I can’t find a job,” said Anita Hussein, 21, a student who speaks crisp English from years of study to be a teacher. “I didn’t want to stay before, but now I want to leave more than ever.”</p> <p>Walking with her teenage sister by a bridge over the nearby Paghman River on her way home, Hussein dismissed the Taliban as a “disaster” who left no room for anyone — men or women — to do anything. “<a href="#">She can’t go to school</a>,” Hussein said, gesturing at her sister, who stood silently by her side.</p>

Even the Taliban's often-repeated assertion that its return to power would herald an era of peace and security hasn't been fulfilled, at least not in Kabul, she said, with Islamic State suicide bombers, rocket salvos and assassinations a regular threat.

Particularly vulnerable — and uneasy — are ethnic minority Hazaras like Hussein. Most are Shiite Muslims, [making them a prime target for attacks](#) by Sunni-dominated Islamic State. Three such attacks took place earlier this month, adding to the at least 68 recorded incidents of explosive weapons being used in Afghanistan so far this year, which have killed more than 300 people and injured twice that many, according to the British-based nonprofit organization Action on Armed Violence.

"Even safety isn't there. Yes, there are less *intihari* bombings because the Taliban themselves were the *intiharis* and they're now in charge," Hussein said, using the Dari word for "suicide bomber."

Suicide attacks were a frequent tactic employed by the [Taliban during its insurgency](#) against Afghanistan's U.S.-backed government. Taliban officials insist that safety has improved overall but concede that stopping suicide bombers is difficult.

Of greater concern to Hussein are the burglaries that she said are now a commonplace occurrence in the Kart-e-Say neighborhood where she and her family live. She noted that, before the *suqoot*, people used to walk around the neighborhood till 9 p.m. with little fear, despite the wartime threats; now, even the banana cart owner who has sold his produce for 20 years from this corner of the bridge leaves by 7 p.m.

"The danger is from normal people because of lack of work, lack of money," Hussein said.

As she spoke, she glanced at the river's edge, where a pair of emaciated, dirt-streaked men stared into the distance.

"[Drug addicts](#)," a passerby explained as Hussein and her sister looked away. "Opium."

One of the men, who gave his name as Turjan, stood up and resumed collecting pieces of plastic that he stuffed into a large bag. Later, he would be able to sell the refuse for 50 afghanis — a little more than 55 cents.

"This is all I can manage," he said, his voice as slight as his frame. His friend, a sharp-featured man in his 20s named Ali Reza, joined the conversation, railing against the Taliban's treatment of him and his friends.

"They don't care about us. They treat us like garbage," Reza said, his movements turning manic as his anger mounted. [Although his family is in Iran](#), he showed no interest in joining them nor in submitting to treatment for his addiction. "This is my place. If I go to the hospital, it's the worst place ever," he said. "I prefer to live under the bridge rather than go back there."

On the surface at least, some things in Kabul remain unchanged.

The Green Zone, the fortified enclave that was once home to foreign diplomats and the Afghans who grew rich from the Western invasion, remains in place, but now with high-ranking Taliban officials — and Al Qaeda leader Ayman Zawahiri, who was [killed in a U.S. drone strike](#) in the posh Sherpur district last month — occupying the garish mansions instead of local warlords. Checkpoints still snarl traffic.

Taliban patrols roam the streets in Ford Ranger pickups commandeered from the previous government. Some haven't even bothered to remove the old Afghan army's tricolor insignia.

Yet no matter how effective the security may be, it's virtually meaningless for 35-year-old Ahmadullah Safi. Like Shafiullah, Safi had been waiting near the [United Nations aid distribution site](#) since just after dawn prayers.



Unlike Shafiullah, Safi stood in a parallel queue of porters with wheelbarrows helping ferry recipients' aid packages to vehicles or homes for 30 afghani, about 34 cents. On his best days, he clears little more than \$3; usually it's half that. In any case, it barely covers the needs of his wife and three children, ages 7, 6 and 3.

"I'm hungry. What do you want me to do with security? How can I eat it?" he said.

His rent has increased by 500 afghani — almost \$6 — in the last few months.

"How can I afford anything? All prices are up," he said. "I've been helping people move bags of flour and I don't even have a kilo of flour at home."

Despite the desperation, deprivation and decreasing opportunities, some Kabulis have tried to preserve some vestige of [their pre-Islamic Emirate existence](#) and forge some kind of modus vivendi with the Taliban.

A few blocks up from the bridge over the Paghman River, 28-year-old Froozan Hotami descended the stairs of a shopping center to join a smattering of women already gathered for what seems almost like an illicit activity these days: the opening of a women-only library, called "Zan," the word for "woman" in Dari. Nearby was a cosmetics shop and a couple of bodybuilding supply stores featuring photos of men with impossibly large biceps and jars of whey protein powder.

The library opening, attended by around two dozen women, had the frisson one would expect to feel at a speakeasy, with people milling around shelves lined with copies of [Michelle Obama's "Becoming"](#) and a wall of posters of important female figures from Afghanistan's past, including Kubra Noorzai, the country's first female government minister.

As a co-founder of the library, Hatami, who had worked in one of the republic's ministries — she demurred from saying which — sees Zan as a way to fight being treated as a second-class citizen by the Taliban, especially after being all but forgotten by the international community, she said.

She cited the Taliban repeatedly delaying the reopening of secondary schools for girls, on the vague grounds of needing to provide a safe learning environment without actually defining what that is, and their barring of women from most professions. The moves flout the Taliban's promises that it would allow girls to resume secondary schooling in March and that [men and women would have equal rights](#).

"We all know women's situation here. It's disappointing, heartbreaking," Hatami said. "Despite all the Taliban's efforts, women continue working, continue doing. We all must be responsible. The international community must be responsible."

Also soldiering on are Kabul's wedding halls, though in diminished form. Before the Taliban came to the capital, weddings were big business, with gargantuan, gaudy halls like the one in the upscale Shahr-e-Naw neighborhood hosting parties 1,000 people strong, featuring musicians, dancers and magicians.

Much of that is [all but outlawed now](#), said Hamid Qazikhil, one of the wedding hall's managers, and a number of compromises are required to adhere to the Taliban's more austere interpretation of moral behavior, including the complete segregation of men and women.

"No dancers or magicians, of course. We can't use musicians so we have DJs now, though only in the women's section," Qazikhil said.

Qazikhil walked toward one of the ballrooms in the hall, showing the polished white partitions stacked on the side that would be set up to separate men and women. That particular ballroom, he said, had been renovated just five days before the Taliban entered the capital Aug. 15, 2021. It had been a massive waste, he said with a wan smile, adding that, with the general lack of money, few weddings exceed 200 or 300

	<p>people now and business has shrunk from 60 weddings a month, with the hall booked day and night, to almost half that number.</p> <p>“These weddings now, there’s not too much enjoyment. Just coming, eating and then leaving,” he said. “It’s all sort of less fun, really.”</p> <p>Daud Sultanzyoy was Kabul’s last mayor under the republic and is <a href="#">one of the few officials who stayed on</a> after the Taliban takeover to help with the transition. He left the country a few months ago but hopes to return.</p> <p>Though he was initially hopeful that the war’s end would bring benefits, a year of Taliban control has yielded few of them. And even if the new regime could offer physical security, it would not know how to capitalize on it, he said.</p> <p>“Security is more than the absence of bombs and bullets. It’s not an end. It’s a means to use as a springboard to do other things, it’s a condition, and if it’s there, then it should produce something,” he said. But all that the Taliban’s leaders have produced so far is a monopolistic grip on power, because that is the one thing they know how to do, he said.</p> <p>“Now that they have produced this, then the burden is on them, and the international community that put Afghanistan in this situation, to look at the 40 million people, their aspirations and needs — just basic needs of human beings in the 21st century, to not become a burden on the rest of the world.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 FBI watchlist: people added, new details</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.techtimes.com/articles/279773/20220828/fbi-watchlist-2022-people-added-name-inclusion-standards-new-details.htm">https://www.techtimes.com/articles/279773/20220828/fbi-watchlist-2022-people-added-name-inclusion-standards-new-details.htm</a>
GIST	<p>The FBI watchlist has been among the most mysterious database of the U.S. government.</p> <p>For the past few years, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been adding people's names due to their suspected involvement in terrorist activities.</p> <p>Of course, FBI authorities can do this without people's consent. Now, many individuals are curious if the U.S. intelligence service is really watching them.</p> <p>People tend to ask lots of questions, such as if they can know if their names are included on the FBI watchlist.</p> <p>If you are among the curious ones, then the latest document acquired by EPIC may be able to help you.</p> <p><b>FBI Watchlist 2022: New Document Acquired</b></p> <p>According to <a href="#">Computer World</a>'s latest report, the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) was able to obtain FBI files after their FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request was approved.</p> <p>Their newly acquired <a href="#">FBI documents</a> show the standards for adding and removing people's names on the watchlist. However, it was confirmed that individuals included in the database couldn't know if their names were there.</p> <p>This is because sharing terrorist watchlist information is illegal, as unauthorized disclosures can also compromise the safety of FBI officers.</p> <p>On the other hand, the documents also stated that the FBI couldn't easily remove the names on the watchlist, even if the individuals are already cleared of all suspected terrorists and other criminal claims.</p> <p><b>FBI Watchlist's Other Details</b></p>

	<p>When it comes to naming inclusions, the FBI can't simply add people to their watchlist without any strong evidence. This means that officers can't claim that an individual is a national security threat based on their "hunch."</p> <p>The security agency needs to ensure that there's at least one source of corroboration before people are added to the watchlist.</p> <p>But, there are some instances when FBI authorities make mistakes. <a href="#">EFF</a> reported a time when the Federal Bureau of Investigation committed an intelligence violation.</p> <p>However, it took more than two years before the Intelligence Oversight Board investigated the intelligence organization. You can visit this <a href="#">link</a> to see more details.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Taliban jabs Pakistan over US drones</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://news.yahoo.com/taliban-jabs-pakistan-over-us-231549462.html">https://news.yahoo.com/taliban-jabs-pakistan-over-us-231549462.html</a>
GIST	<p>The Taliban's acting defense minister on Sunday accused Pakistan of allowing U.S. drones to enter and attack Afghanistan through Pakistan's airspace.</p> <p>"According to our information, the drones are entering through Pakistan to Afghanistan, they use Pakistan's airspace, we ask Pakistan, don't use your airspace against us," the Taliban's Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob <a href="#">told</a> reporters at a Kabul news conference, per translations.</p> <p>A U.S. drone strike in Kabul last month <a href="#">killed</a> al Qaeda leader <a href="#">Ayman al-Zawahiri</a>, a former deputy to <a href="#">Osama bin Laden</a> and a key planner of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.</p> <p>Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs denied Yaqoob's claims in a <a href="#">statement</a>, noting "deep concern" about the "conjectural allegations."</p> <p>"In the absence of any evidence, as acknowledged by the Afghan Minister himself, such conjectural allegations are highly regrettable and defy the norms of responsible diplomatic conduct," the statement reads.</p> <p>Pakistan's foreign ministry also urged Afghanistan "not to allow the use of its territory for terrorism against any country."</p> <p>The Biden administration has <a href="#">touted</a> the strike on al-Zawahiri as a long-coming deliverance of justice. "If you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out," Biden said in a televised address announcing the strike earlier this month.</p> <p>Al-Zawahiri assumed leadership of the terrorist group al Qaeda after bin Laden was killed by U.S. forces as part of a secret raid in a compound in Pakistan.</p> <p>Pakistan has reportedly denied involvement in the strike on al-Zawahiri, and its foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari <a href="#">told Reuters</a> Sunday that the country's airspace had not been used.</p> <p>The Hill has reached out to the Embassy of Pakistan and the CIA for comment.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/29 Indonesia delays release of Bali terrorist</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.afr.com/world/asia/bali-terrorist-release-delayed-experts-say-he-could-still-be-a-threat-20220829-p5bdnp">https://www.afr.com/world/asia/bali-terrorist-release-delayed-experts-say-he-could-still-be-a-threat-20220829-p5bdnp</a>
GIST	<p><i>Singapore/Surabaya, East Java</i>   Indonesia's central government has delayed <a href="#">the release of Bali bombmaker Umar Patek</a> and slapped down efforts to promote the prisoner as a rehabilitation success.</p>

Umar was a senior figure in Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the radical Islamic group responsible for the terrorist attack that killed 202 people, including 88 Australians, in Bali on October 12, 20002.

He was sentenced to 20 years in jail in 2012 after pleading guilty to helping make the bombs that ripped apart the tourist hotspots of Paddy's Bar and the Sari Club. Another was detonated outside the American consulate nearby.

Remissions granted over the years have chipped away at that sentence and the Australian government was quick to protest after it was reduced again earlier this month.

The latest remission, granted as part of Indonesia's National Day concessions, mean Umar was technically eligible for parole on August 17 after serving two-thirds of his shortened sentence.

However, the central government has not yet approved parole. It now appears this could still be some weeks away.

On Sunday, the central government ordered the Pogor prison run by the provincial level of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to take down a bizarre video interview featuring Umar and prison governor Jalu Yuswa Panjang.

In the video, that was loaded onto the prison's YouTube channel, Umar said he wanted to work with those trying to steer youth away from radical Islam.

Umar told much the same thing to local reporters a few weeks ago. Those who have studied JI say Umar's deradicalisation is not the same as repentance and he remains a respected figure in the group.

"JI needs to present itself as an organisation opposed to terrorist acts so it can continue to operate and recruit in Indonesia," said Al Chaidar, Terrorism Researcher from Malikussaleh University in Aceh.

"This deradicalisation is a diversion, a strategy followed by both the old mufti [leader] and the new mufti. There are only three countries that JI will not attack - Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan - because many JI people live in those countries," Mr Al Chaidar said.

Even if Umar really does believe he is deradicalised, this might not last, said Ridlwan Habib, executive director of the Indonesia Intelligence Institute in Jakarta.

"After the first three months of parole and mandatory reporting, it's easy to lose track of released prisoners," he said. It will be difficult to monitor Umar's claim that he is now a nationalist, "wrapped in the red and white" of Indonesia's flag. Ridlwan points out that Umar was a terrorist before the Bali bombings.

"Umar Patek's resentment towards Western interests, such as Australia and United States, has been ideological since he was in Afghanistan [in the 1990s]. Changing ideological thinking is a gamble. If he has indeed changed his thinking, that will help reduce the threat posed by JI. If not, the threat will increase with his release," Mr Ridlwan said.

Teuku Rezasyah, an international relations expert from Padjadjaran University, West Java, said it was obvious the central government was unhappy with the provincial government's rush to promote the success of the radicalisation program used in the prison.

"The difference in response is very regrettable because it shows a lack of coordination between the central and local governments, even though this is a high-profile and sensitive issue," Mr Teuku said.

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HEADLINE	08/28 Indonesia militant regrets Bali bombing role
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theadvocate.com.au/story/7880558/militant-says-he-regrets-bali-bombing-role/?cs=5">https://www.theadvocate.com.au/story/7880558/militant-says-he-regrets-bali-bombing-role/?cs=5</a>

GIST	<p>An Indonesian militant has expressed regret for his role in the deadly 2002 Bali bombings, media reports say, as news of his impending release sparks outrage in Australia.</p> <p>Umar Patek was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2012 for his involvement in bombings that ripped through two Bali nightclubs, killing 202 people, including 88 Australians.</p> <p>He became eligible for parole this month after a series of remissions for good behaviour.</p> <p>The exact date of his release, the final sign-off for which rests with Indonesia's justice minister, remains unclear.</p> <p>Citing a rare video shot in the Porong prison where the Bali bomb-maker is being held, ABC News reported he also hopes to warn young Indonesians about the dangers of religious extremism upon his expected release.</p> <p>Reuters was unable to review the video of Umar Patek. It has been removed from Porong prison's official YouTube channel as it had not been authorised by the justice ministry, said the prison head, Jalu Yuswa Panjang.</p> <p>News of Patek's impending parole has sparked concern in Australia, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese saying his release would have a "devastating impact on the families of victims".</p> <p>On Sunday, East Java's Porong prison, where Patek has been held since 2014, uploaded a 20-minute video of Patek and the prison head strolling through the prison grounds as the convicted militant discusses his role in the deadly attack, according to the ABC.</p> <p>"My mistake was to be involved with the Bali bombing," he tells the prison head in the video.</p> <p>During his trial in 2012, Patek's lawyers argued he was only following orders when he assembled the bombs, and had neither planned nor executed the attack.</p> <p>Indonesian authorities have since highlighted Patek as an example of the country's deradicalisation efforts.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Al-Shabab issues new threat against Kenya</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.voanews.com/a/6719911.html">https://www.voanews.com/a/6719911.html</a>
GIST	<p>MOGADISHU — Somali-based, al-Qaida-affiliated Islamist militant group al-Shabab has issued a new threat against neighboring Kenya. The group said it will continue its attacks in that country as long as Kenyan troops are in Somalia.</p> <p>Al-Shabab said in an English-language statement Saturday it will continue to target Kenyan towns and cities until Kenyan troops are out of Somalia.</p> <p>It said that if the Kenyan government continues to maintain its “invasion” of Muslim lands it will continue to strike inside Kenya.</p> <p>“Know that we will continue to defend our lands and our people from the aggressive Kenyan invasion. We will continue to concentrate our attacks on Kenyan towns and cities as long as Kenyan forces continue to occupy our Muslim lands,” the group said.</p> <p>Omar Mahmood, an International Crisis Group senior analyst for Eastern Africa discussed the situation with VOA via WhatsApp.</p>

	<p>“Generally, al-Shabab remains a threat to Kenya, both from infiltration across the border and terrorist attacks in other parts of the country. So, they will continue trying to target Kenya if they don't get what they want, which at its core is the end of a Kenyan military operation in Somalia,” he said.</p> <p>Mohamed Husein Gaas, director of the Raad Peace Research Institute based in Mogadishu, told VOA by phone that al-Shabab threats are real, as they have seen the organization become stronger financially in the last few years, despite the presence of African Union forces in Somalia.</p> <p>“The region's increased insecurity due to the ongoing civil war in Ethiopia and the underlying political and social polarization will likely exasperate the insecurity of the region as a whole,” he said.</p> <p>He said the group also may have also become more oriented toward outward expansion, as signaled by the recent attack on Ethiopia’s Somali state.</p> <p>Al-Shabab has been fighting Somali government and AU peacekeeping operations in the country more than 15 years.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Guilty plea: knife attack plot behalf of ISIS</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/queens-man-pleads-guilty-to-planning-knife-attack-on-behalf-of-isis/">https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/queens-man-pleads-guilty-to-planning-knife-attack-on-behalf-of-isis/</a>
GIST	<p>Awais Chudhary, 22, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Pakistan and residing in Queens, pleaded guilty today in federal court in Brooklyn to attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a designated foreign terrorist organization.</p> <p>According to court filings, in August 2019, after watching violent terrorist propaganda videos, Chudhary pledged his allegiance to ISIS’s then-leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and began planning for a knife or bomb attack as a lone wolf ISIS supporter. Chudhary identified targets, including the pedestrian bridges over the Grand Central Parkway and the Flushing Bay Promenade, where he intended to carry out the attacks. Chudhary sought guidance from individuals whom he believed to be ISIS supporters, including what type of knife to use and how to prevent detection from law enforcement by not leaving “traces of finger prints [or] DNA.” Chudhary also sent a screenshot of a document from an ISIS propaganda magazine that included a diagram of the human body depicting where to stab victims with a knife. Chudhary conducted several reconnaissance trips to these locations and made video recordings of the areas he intended to attack.</p> <p>Chudhary ordered items online that he intended to use to commit a terrorist attack, including a tactical knife, a mask, gloves, and a cellphone chest and head strap – to facilitate his recording of the attack, which he hoped would serve as inspiration to other ISIS supporters. Chudhary was arrested as he attempted to retrieve the items from an online retailer’s locker in Queens.</p> <p>When sentenced, Chudhary faces up to 20 years in prison.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a> <a href="#">Read more at the Justice Department</a>

HEADLINE	<b>08/27 New Mexico arrest: attempt to support ISIS</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/new-mexico-man-arrested-attempting-provide-material/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/new-mexico-man-arrested-attempting-provide-material/</a>
GIST	<p>A New Mexico man, Herman Leyvoune Wilson, alias Bilal Mu’Min Abdullah, was arrested Friday on charges of attempting to provide material support to the international terrorist group ISIS.</p> <p>Mr. Wilson was indicted by a federal grand jury on those charges Tuesday.</p> <p>He is accused of attempting to create an “Islamic State Center” in New Mexico, aiming to “teach ISIS ideology, provide training in tactical maneuvers and martial arts, and serve as a safe haven for individuals preparing to travel and fight on behalf of ISIS,” according to a <a href="#">statement</a> from the Department of Justice.</p>



These alleged activities took place between Jan. 23, 2020 and Nov. 20, 2021.

In addition to the charges of material support, Mr. Wilson is also accused of operating an online platform promoting ISIS ideology, and charged with obstruction and concealment of records by shutting down said platform.

These alleged recruitment efforts bore fruit. Texan Jaylin Molina and South Carolinian Kristopher Matthews pleaded guilty to their own charges of providing material support to ISIS, and named Mr. Wilson as an ideological influence.

“Matthews and Molina admitted that Wilson radicalized them to ISIS’s ideology, and that without Wilson’s influence, they would never have committed the crimes. When Matthews and Molina were arrested, Wilson allegedly instructed online platform members to destroy evidence of their use of the group,” the Department of Justice’s statement reads.

Mr. Wilson’s alleged recruiting efforts also branched outside the digital space. He is accused of holding meetings in Albuquerque to “rally pro-ISIS individuals to jihad, further support, and possibly martyrdom” and discuss “attacking law enforcement, acquiring firearms, killing imams who do not support ISIS, and inspiring others to wage jihad,” according to a prosecutorial motion cited by the Albuquerque Journal.

United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico Alexander Uballez said in a statement that “We will not tolerate threats to our country from terrorist organizations like ISIS. We will vigorously prosecute anyone who attempts to provide material support to terrorists.”

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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	08/26 Large, stripe-eyed grasshoppers Everett
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3609716/be-on-the-lookout-for-oversized-striped-eyed-grasshoppers-in-everett-area/">https://mynorthwest.com/3609716/be-on-the-lookout-for-oversized-striped-eyed-grasshoppers-in-everett-area/</a>
GIST	<p>People who live in the Everett area are being asked to report sightings of an unusually large grasshopper with distinct striped eyes.</p> <p>Earlier this year, an Everett resident reported seeing an Egyptian grasshopper (<i>Anacridium aegyptium</i>). Entomologists with the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently confirmed that sighting was the first detection of the grasshopper in the state.</p> <p>The Washington State Department of Agriculture will survey the area but is asking the public to also be on the lookout for the large grasshopper with unusual eyes.</p> <p>Typically, the grasshoppers eat plant leaves. Egyptian grasshoppers are generally considered to be a minor pest of concern in their native habitat but occasionally could be a pest to crops, orchards and vineyards, according to WSDA. The USDA is gathering information to help determine possible risks from the insect.</p> <p>“An overwintering grasshopper could easily hitchhike, so this is another case where we are asking the public to help us figure out if this is just a single specimen,” SDA managing entomologist Sven Spichiger said.</p> <p>There has only been one confirmed sighting of a living, but sluggish grasshopper, and so far, there is no evidence of an established population.</p> <p>Adults are usually olive, gray or brown in color and are most likely seen near the end of summer.</p>

	<p>Young grasshoppers can be green and may blend in with plants. Males can grow to more than 2 inches long and females can reach nearly 3 inches long, according to WSDA.</p> <p>The black stripes on the Egyptian grasshopper’s eyes make them distinct from other grasshoppers.</p> <p>People living near Everett who think they have seen the insect are asked to send a photo to <a href="mailto:pestprogram@agr.wa.gov">pestprogram@agr.wa.gov</a> and include the location where it was spotted.</p> <p>Anyone who believes they have seen an Egyptian grasshopper outside of Washington state is asked to take a picture of it, make a note of the location, and report it to their <a href="#">state plant regulatory official</a> or <a href="#">state plant health director</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Roman ruins emerge drought-stricken river</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/roman-ruins-reappear-from-river-in-drought-stricken-europe-almost-2000-years-later/ar-AA11b5HC">https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/roman-ruins-reappear-from-river-in-drought-stricken-europe-almost-2000-years-later/ar-AA11b5HC</a>
GIST	<p>Dropping water levels revealed a massive complex of Roman ruins in Spain as Europe continues to struggle under a record-breaking drought.</p> <p>Ancient Romans began construction on a military camp in what is now northwestern Spain, along the Lima River in Galicia, in about 75 AD, Spanish researchers wrote in a 2018 study. They abandoned the camp about a century later.</p> <p>The remaining ruins became submerged after the construction of a dam in 1949 created the <a href="#">As Conchas</a> reservoir, The Guardian reported.</p> <p>But this summer, all droughts led to Rome.</p> <p>The <a href="#">ancient camp</a> reappeared on the river bank — its entire ruined complex on display, drone footage posted on Friday by Faro de Vigo showed.</p> <p>Aerial photographs show a sprawling collection of neatly organized stone structures primarily made of gray-brown cobblestones. What’s left of a wall runs around the smaller structures, water lapping at its edge. A once-grand entrance stands partially collapsed, almost welcoming the river that lies just beyond its doorway.</p> <p>Pillar bases — their tops long gone — adorn the waist-height rock walls, the video shows. A single archway still stands, defiant against the wearing forces of time and water. Greenery adorns the ruins.</p> <p>This is <a href="#">Aquis Querquennis</a>, called “A Cida” or “the city” by locals, Ondacero, a local outlet, reports.</p> <p>In its prime, Aquis Querquennis housed up to 600 Roman soldiers, <a href="#">Atlas Obscura</a> reported. It had multiple barracks, two granaries, a hospital, temple, and thermal baths from the area’s natural hot springs. Romans at the camp would throw offerings of spiritual significance into the hot baths, Atlas Obscura reported.</p> <p>Centuries later, all of Aquis Querquennis had been thrown under water. The full complex emerged as water levels in the As Conchas reservoir fell to <a href="#">49% capacity</a>, Faro de Vigo reported in early August.</p> <p>Spain – like much of Europe – has struggled under above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall, causing a <a href="#">heat wave and drought</a>, BBC reported. Almost two-thirds of Europe is under <a href="#">drought warning or alert conditions</a>, according to the European Drought Observatory.</p> <p>The region’s current drought, amplified by human-induced <a href="#">climate change</a>, appears to be the worst one in at least 500 years, CNBC reported, citing meteorologists.</p>

	<p>As a result, “nearly all of Europe’s rivers have dried up to some extent,” BBC reported on Aug. 24, citing an EU report. Pieces of history – “hunger stones,” World War II shipwrecks and “megalithic monuments” – have surfaced in these drying waterways.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the drought is far from over, BBC reported, with the hot and dry conditions likely continuing until November. Drought conditions are expected to worsen in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Moldova, the Netherlands, northern Serbia, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, CNBC reported, citing the EU report.</p> <p>Aquis Querquennis is about 300 miles northwest of Madrid, near the Spain-Portugal border.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Most extreme temperatures in past decade</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/28/extreme-temperatures-death-valley-minnesota/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/28/extreme-temperatures-death-valley-minnesota/</a>
GIST	<p>With its sweltering deserts and frigid northern plains, the United States features some of the world’s most extreme weather.</p> <p>Every day, the National Weather Service <a href="#">publishes the</a> highest and lowest temperatures recorded at reliable weather stations in the Lower 48 states.</p> <p>An analysis of more than a decade of this data reveals the nation’s most exceptional temperatures range from a scorching 130 degrees in Death Valley, Calif., to a numbing minus-56 degrees in Cotton, Minn.</p> <p><b>Highest highs and lowest lows</b></p> <p>The highest highs and lowest lows across the United States generally occur where they do because of a combination of weather patterns, the sun angle and local topography.</p> <p>The highest maximum temperature measured between December 2011 and July 2022 was a sweltering 130 degrees, recorded on Aug. 16, 2020, and again on July 9, 2021. Both were recorded in Death Valley National Park, a barren and low-lying strip of desert surrounded on all sides by tall mountains.</p> <p>The unusual topography of the park, which is the lowest point in the United States, promotes extreme heat. The weather station there holds the official but controversial record for the highest temperature <a href="#">ever recorded</a> on Earth’s surface, of 134 degrees.</p> <p>The lowest temperature in the past 10 years, meanwhile, was a frigid minus-56 degrees in Cotton, Minn., on Jan. 31, 2019. The town, about 31 miles northwest of Duluth, was at the epicenter of the severe cold air outbreak that struck much of the central United States that week, during one of the most <a href="#">extreme periods</a> of cold to impact the Midwest in decades.</p> <p><b>The most extreme days</b></p> <p>Taking the average of these daily extremes and comparing them with the average over this 10-year period uncovered the most unusually warm and cold days. The most unusual extremely warm day occurred on Dec. 31, 2011, when the average of the extreme high and low was nearly 20 degrees above the decade average of 25.8 degrees.</p> <p>Oct. 30, 2019, featured the decade’s coldest extremes. The average of warmest highest and coldest low on the day before Halloween is 49.5 degrees but, that day, the average was just 24.5 degrees, which was 25 degrees below normal.</p> <p>The chill of that late October day was the fault of a slug of frigid air that slid along the Rockies, bringing a minimum temperature of minus-46 degrees to the notoriously cold valley in Utah known as Peter Sinks. It was the coldest October low nationwide in the past decade by 11 degrees.</p>

## Records by state

The daily coldest and warmest temperatures recorded in the United States are almost always west of the Mississippi, according to National Weather Service data.

Colorado was the state most likely to see the coldest minimum daily temperatures in the summer, registering the coldest low temperatures more than 600 times. The other states that most frequently posted the nation's coldest summer temperatures were Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota and Idaho, in that order.

The highest maximum temperatures were concentrated in just a few states. The clear winner in this regard is California, with Death Valley responsible for a majority of the state's hot weather extremes. Texas, Florida and Arizona also each recorded significant numbers of the highest daily recorded temperatures in the United States.

One unexpected facet of the data was a nationwide high in Massachusetts, on April 16, 2012, when the town of Westfield reached 93 degrees ahead of a powerful cold front. The exceptional New England heat coincided with the Boston Marathon, making for one of the hottest races in the city's history.

Another interesting feature in this data is that California had the Lower 48's highest and lowest temperature 195 times. Most recently, on June 29, Death Valley soared to 119 degrees, while Bodie, a former gold-mining town near the Nevada border, saw its temperature plummet to a nationwide low of 26 degrees.

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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	08/28 Chicago street takeovers, racing arrests
SOURCE	<a href="https://chicago.suntimes.com/2022/8/28/23326021/chicago-drag-racing-drifters-street-takeovers-weekend-august">https://chicago.suntimes.com/2022/8/28/23326021/chicago-drag-racing-drifters-street-takeovers-weekend-august</a>
GIST	<p>Stunt drivers and spectators flooded Chicago streets for a second straight weekend night, disturbing residents, attacking cops and damaging police cars during some of the unsanctioned events that allegedly drew participants from across the country.</p> <p>Chicago police officials couldn't immediately provide details about the latest round of so-called street takeovers early Sunday. But in a statement, the department said some officers "were assaulted with bricks and bottles."</p> <p>Six police cars were also damaged at one event at the intersection of Cermak Road and Lumber Street on the Lower West Side, a spokesperson said. No officers were injured, and no arrests were made.</p> <p>Videos posted online show a group of people striking and throwing objects at a police SUV, which can be seen driving toward the crowd as other police vehicles sit in the background.</p> <p>The Chicago Sun-Times has previously reported on the city's <a href="#">burgeoning underground car culture</a>, powered by social media campaigns directing hundreds of people to certain intersections. The meets have scattered across the city, pulling drivers to industrial parks, empty mall parking lots and even the downtown area — to the chagrin of local residents and their alderpersons.</p> <p>Andrea Graneas was awoken early Sunday by the sound of revving engines and screeching tires outside her West Loop condominium. She said she was "floored" when she saw drivers drifting through the intersection of Madison and Morgan streets.</p>

Videos she took show dozens of vehicles blocking off streets as a large group of bystanders watch cars spinning in circles, with one kicking up clouds of smoke from its back tires as people hung out the windows and others ran into the center of the intersection.

"I've lived in the West Loop since '96 and this has never, ever occurred here before," Graneas told the Sun-Times. "It's just wild."

She said she was particularly "baffled at the fact that people were standing so close" to the action "without any fear of getting hurt."

"They could've also crashed into buildings," she said. "But it didn't look like their intention was to crash their cars. They were just putting on a show, it seemed, of [doing] donuts."

### **At least three men arrested**

The meetup in the West Loop came amid a chaotic weekend that started with onlookers clashing with the cops late Friday on the Far South Side. That gathering had been advertised on social media as [a "wild" event pitting "Chicago vs. Everybody,"](#) with drivers coming from Detroit, the Bay Area and other parts of the country.

Within hours, two 18-year-old men were arrested at another takeover early Saturday on the Near South Side. One was charged with a misdemeanor count of reckless conduct, while the other had his car impounded — apparently the first taken under a new city ordinance aimed at getting a handle on the street takeovers.

Omar Daaboul, 19, from Worth, was also arrested early that morning after he allegedly drove toward a police sergeant trying to stop him in the 500 block of South Clinton Street.

He faces a felony count of aggravated assault of a peace officer, in addition to lesser offenses. A police spokesperson didn't respond when asked whether Daaboul's car was impounded.

During his initial court hearing Sunday, prosecutors said officers "investigating a drag racing incident" saw Daaboul standing next to a vehicle that was allegedly involved. When the sergeant approached him, prosecutors said Daaboul hopped into his Dodge Challenger, backed into a vehicle and then drove forward toward the sergeant.

Reading from Daaboul's arrest report, Judge Charles Beach noted the sergeant had to jump out of the Challenger's path and another officer had to break a window to get him out of the car. He was on probation at the time after pleading guilty in a felony gun case in May, court records show.

Daaboul's attorney, Steven Muslin, asked for a reasonable bond, noting there's no evidence that he had a weapon during Saturday's arrest. "Nobody was injured, thank God," Muslin said.

The judge ordered Daaboul held without bail for violating the terms of his probation and set bail at \$30,000 in the new case. He's expected in court again on Monday.

Another drifting event scheduled for Sunday night was canceled "due to major police activity," according to an announcement posted online.

### **Mayor, top cop 'failing completely' in addressing takeovers**

A police spokesperson noted that stunt gatherings are "not only illegal in the streets of Chicago but are also dangerous to the drivers and spectators."

"The Chicago Police Department will enforce the recently passed City ordinance, which holds those participating in drag racing and drifting accountable," the spokesperson said. "Those who are caught violating the ordinance could have their vehicles impounded and face a fine of up to \$10,000."

	<p>But Ald. Raymond Lopez (15th) complained that his colleagues in City Council have “acted very timidly” in addressing the illegal events. He criticized a provision in the new ordinance that requires police to mail the owner “a notice of intent to impound,” along with a statement of probable cause and a police report.</p> <p>“Being able to impound the cars, but only after they’re stopped and caught later, doesn’t address the immediacy of the situations as they’re unfolding in our communities,” he said.</p> <p>A mayoral candidate and vocal critic of Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Lopez claimed she and Chicago Police Supt. David Brown are “failing completely” in addressing the street takeovers and have effectively allowed participants to target officers and destroy police vehicles “without consequence.”</p> <p>Lopez said members of the National Guard should be called in to cover for officers being pulled away from places like “the Bean” and the Magnificent Mile to respond to the drag racing events. “They can do the babysitting there,” he said of the National Guard.</p> <p>He added that officials from the Illinois State Police and the Cook County sheriff’s office should be used to “augment” the response to the takeovers, which can spring up in a matter of minutes and have left officers overwhelmed. In addition, he recommended using salt trucks and snow plows to “corral and pin” the stunt drivers, allowing officers to arrest them and impound their vehicles onsite.</p> <p>“The moment we show there’s consequences, this nonsense will come to an end,” he said. “Until then, expect it to continue.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Warning: rainbow fentanyl busts in Oregon</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.chronline.com/stories/rainbow-fentanyl-busts-in-oregon-prompt-federal-safety-warning.298922?">https://www.chronline.com/stories/rainbow-fentanyl-busts-in-oregon-prompt-federal-safety-warning.298922?</a>
GIST	<p>Separate “notable seizures” of rainbow fentanyl in the Portland area spurred federal authorities to issue a warning Friday about the brightly colored clumps of the synthetic opioid that look like sidewalk chalk.</p> <p>Multnomah County announced in mid-August that deputies had seized about 4 ounces of multi-colored fentanyl powder from a safe in a Northeast Portland apartment.</p> <p>Earlier this week, Tigard police said officers found 5.5 grams of rainbow fentanyl chunks (about two-tenths of an ounce) during a search of a man who had been reported by witnesses on top of a car and screaming on Aug. 10.</p> <p>Rainbow fentanyl has been seized elsewhere in the form of pills that resemble candy, federal officials said. They said anyone who encounters any form of fentanyl shouldn’t touch it and should call 911 immediately.</p> <p>“We urge all Oregonians to be on the lookout for fentanyl in our community and respect the highly toxic nature of this substance,” said Steve Mygrant, the lead drug prosecutor in Oregon’s U.S. Attorney’s Office.</p> <p>The Portland office of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration is seizing record amounts of fentanyl, said Jacob D. Galvan, the acting special agent in charge of the agency’s office in Seattle.</p> <p>Fentanyl is 80 to 100 times more potent than morphine and 30 to 50 times more potent than heroin.</p> <p>About 107,000 people died in drug overdoses across the U.S. last year — with synthetic opioids, mostly fentanyl, accounting for more than three-quarters of the deaths, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 LA bar, Sikh temple shootings: 9 wounded</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/6-wounded-in-Los-Angeles-bar-shooting-3-shot-at-17403639.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/6-wounded-in-Los-Angeles-bar-shooting-3-shot-at-17403639.php</a>
GIST	<p>LOS ANGELES (AP) — At least nine people were wounded in separate shootings at a bar in Los Angeles and a Sikh Temple in Stockton, authorities said.</p> <p>A man opened fire Sunday inside a crowded bar in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights, wounding six people, including one who is in critical condition, the Los Angeles Police Department said.</p> <p>Witnesses told police people were fighting at the Holiday Bar when a man pulled out a gun and fired into the crowd.</p> <p>“It is unknown who he was arguing with,” LA police Lt. Letisia Ruiz told KTLA. “When he produced the handgun he shot into the crowd and that’s when individuals got struck by gunfire.”</p> <p>Four men and two women were wounded, Ruiz said. A suspect, whose name was not immediately released, was arrested.</p> <p>In the Northern California city of Stockton, three men ages 27, 28 and 32, were wounded Saturday during a shooting between two groups at a Sikh temple where an event was being held, the Stockton Police Department said Sunday in a news release.</p> <p>Officers responded to reports about a shooting at the temple on the 1900 block of Sikh Temple Street and found the three victims who were shot after “a disturbance with another group resulted in an exchange of gunfire,” the department said Sunday in a statement.</p> <p>Two men are being sought in the shooting. Police said that the victims and the two unidentified suspects are Sikhs.</p> <p>The victims were taken to the hospital for what appeared to be non-life-threatening injuries.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Seattle jail ‘astronomical’ suicide rate; why?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/times-watchdog/seattle-jail-has-an-astronomical-suicide-rate-little-is-changing/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/times-watchdog/seattle-jail-has-an-astronomical-suicide-rate-little-is-changing/</a>
GIST	<p>On Aug. 2, 59-year-old Allen Duane McNutt became the fifth person incarcerated in the downtown Seattle jail to die by suicide in the past year.</p> <p>Suicides are the leading cause of deaths in jail here and nationwide, but the number of suicides at the Seattle jail — one of two adult jails run by King County — is extreme, experts say.</p> <p>The rate of suicides at Seattle’s jail since August 2021 has far exceeded national averages from before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the most recent data available. Between 2000-2019, local jails across the country averaged an annual suicide rate of 49 for every 100,000 people in jail. In the 12 months before McNutt’s death, six people died at the Seattle jail, four of them by suicide.</p> <p>Though King County Jail officials say only two of the four suicide deaths would be counted toward those statistics, since the other two victims were released from custody while in the hospital, that would still put King County’s rate at more than four times the national pre-pandemic average. If all four deaths were counted, it would be eight times the average.</p> <p>“It’s astronomical,” said Frances Abderhalden, an expert on jail suicides and an assistant professor of criminal justice at California State University, Los Angeles. “It begs the question to me: Why this facility? That’s a lot of death in general in one facility per year.”</p> <p>The isolation of the COVID pandemic has created alarming conditions within jail walls: While COVID restrictions have lifted in most public places, incarcerated people are dying at a time when in-person</p>

visitation at the jail is largely shuttered, group programming is suspended and understaffing has meant that people are staying in cells alone for 23 hours a day.

At the same time, King County's average daily jail population and length of stay have steadily increased this year. As of last month, the average daily population in the downtown jail increased to more than 1,200 people — larger than the highest pre-pandemic counts in 2019. Public concern about crime is high and King County mayors are pushing for the jail to accept more bookings.

Meanwhile, elected officials have made few changes to support inmates' mental health, announcing no specific plans to restore visitation and programming, and moving slowly on facilities fixes that could prevent deaths.

Family members of incarcerated people say they worry about loved ones they're unable to visit, particularly family members who are already diagnosed with serious mental illnesses. The downtown Seattle jail has long been one of the county's main interventions for people in crisis: Without a more robust mental and behavioral health system, the only way many people end up getting access to help is by getting arrested.

But family members say it's only making their loved ones sicker.

Marilynn, a mother of a man formerly incarcerated in the King County Jail this year who was recently discharged from a psychiatric hospital, said she felt helpless and afraid as her son decompensated in jail. She declined to put her last name in print to protect his identity.

Marilynn said that without visitation her son had "nowhere to hold onto reality." Upon release from the jail, his hands trembled and he looked close to passing out, she said.

"He didn't even recognize me," she said. "He just had this blank look on his face."

"It's like, what did they do to him in there?"

### **Isolation**

Four of the suicide deaths since August 2021 had two things in common.

First, they took place in single cells. They were also among people in the general population, not on the floor where people with serious mental illnesses are housed under closer supervision.

Isolation is a key factor in suicidal behavior, experts say. Connectedness, or face-to-face interaction with a support system, keeps people alive.

"Phone calls and Zoom calls just [aren't] the same," Abderhalden, the suicidologist, said.

The King County Jail started housing people primarily in single cells at the outset of the pandemic as a way to reduce COVID transmission rates. King County auditors last year also recommended avoiding double bunking to prevent violence among people sharing housing units.

At the same time, the jail suspended group programming to prevent the spread of COVID. But while many group activities on the outside have resumed, programs inside the jail — like Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, group religious services and GED courses — have not.

"Loneliness, boredom and hopelessness are all tied into those two policies of visitation and programming," Abderhalden said. By removing opportunities for connectedness, she added, the jail is "amplifying" factors that contribute to suicidal behavior.

A major part of the jail's suicide-prevention strategy is to ask people whether they're considering suicide or have been recently suicidal before they're booked. Another screening during booking is also meant to identify people with serious mental illnesses.

But people might not want to reveal their symptoms, particularly if it means more restrictive housing in the psych unit. Screening for active suicidal thoughts also doesn't take into account the fact a person might become suicidal while in jail.

Even for those who do already have diagnoses of serious mental illnesses, family members say it's clear the jail setting has exacerbated their conditions.

"They have no exercise. They have no activities. There's not even a radio available," said Abe, another parent of an adult with serious mental illness incarcerated in the Seattle jail. "A substantial number of individuals with severe mental illness are in the jail, and when we're talking about suicide risks, the biggest risk is despair."

Jail spokesperson Noah Haglund said the jail plans to restart in-person visitation and programming when staffing is appropriate, but offered no specifics on what benchmarks would be used to change those policies.

"We are working to bring back these activities as soon as we are confident that we can do so safely," Haglund said by email.

### **Med stat three**

When staff and incarcerated people witness suicide attempts or death inside the jail, it can create a chain of trauma that passes on to others. Nightmares and hypervigilance, two symptoms of post-traumatic stress, are common, several people told The Seattle Times.

Staff and incarcerated people hear "med stat three" called over the loudspeaker — the code for severe or life-threatening emergencies — and they know what follows.

Several people heard or saw 34-year-old Erick Hernandez-Mendoza dying of an accidental overdose on the ninth floor of the Seattle jail in February.

He was convulsing in the toilet area, right by the bunk where one man, who declined to have his name published for fear of retaliation in the jail, had been sleeping.

Since that morning, the man who witnessed Hernandez-Mendoza dying said he's had nightmares. He has asked to see a psychiatrist and have his bunk moved away from the toilets, which is where the scene replays in his head.

"It's not like it just goes away," the man said.

A second man recently incarcerated in the jail who witnessed Hernandez-Mendoza's death — and who also declined to have his name printed for fear of retaliation — said the death shook his sense of safety. People incarcerated in the jail are at the mercy of whether staff care enough to do something if they're hurt, he said.

"You're always thinking somebody's out to harm you," he said. "Or overlook what happened to you by another inmate."

Shana Cantoni, who worked as a psychiatric nurse practitioner at the jail for 10 years, also remembers the calls over the loudspeakers.

"I would have a physiological response when the loudspeaker would come to life and would find myself saying, please don't be a med stat three," Cantoni said.

Over time, burnout and the devaluing of mental health care in the jail, according to Cantoni, pushed her to leave in 2021. During COVID, the jail required psychiatric providers like her to see people in their housing units for psychiatric assessments or treatment, where others could overhear their conversations, instead of in the jail's clinic. There was little to no privacy for the people she was seeing.

"I interpreted this as the county having little interest in whether or not inmate patients had access to psychiatric provider services," Cantoni said.

The jail disputed this characterization, saying the changes to how psychiatric providers saw patients were "medically necessary to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak and have absolutely no bearing on how much the County cares about mental health."

"The County values mental health care in the jail and strives to provide the best services possible to those in our care and custody," Haglund, the jail spokesperson, said.

Witnessing death, suicide or suicide attempts also stresses the jail's population of corrections officers — a group already dealing with severe understaffing. Since the beginning of 2020, staff vacancies have risen from 25 open positions to nearly 100 — almost a fifth of the jail's corrections officer workforce — and jail officials say the staffing shortages affect opportunities for visitation and getting people out of cells.

Dennis Folk, president of the King County Corrections Guild, said a colleague went on extended leave to seek mental health treatment after witnessing two suicide attempts at the King County Jail in Kent.

"These things build up over time and I think this contributes to our really high PTSD and suicide rates within our profession," Folk said.

Abderhalden, the suicidologist, said seeing suicide, or being exposed to it, can increase a person's risk for suicide even if they hadn't previously had suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

In an intimate setting like a jail, even one death can profoundly affect dozens of people, she said. Not just corrections officers, nurses and attorneys, but also their families — the people who then deal with their loved ones' trauma exposure at work and coping mechanisms at home.

"If they're returning back to the community, that's going to trickle out," Abderhalden said.

### **Prevention**

Experts say suicide prevention in the jail should include three things: researching deaths that occur to identify common factors, suicide-proofing the jail setting as much as possible and decreasing emotional and social isolation.

"If they're going to be housed alone, [make] sure there's nothing they can do in that setting to take their life," said Lanny Berman, former executive director of the American Association of Suicidology and current adjunct professor of psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

After [The Seattle Times published a report showing that the jail was not complying with a new state law to make information about jail deaths public](#) earlier this year, the King County Jail started making its internal reviews of deaths public on a website.

But despite the growing rate of deaths in the downtown Seattle jail — and the [March 2022 announcement of a \\$750,000 settlement](#) to the family of a man who said the county did little to prevent his suicide — officials have made few efforts to decrease isolation and make sure people aren't being placed in cells with suicide risks.

Elected officials who govern the jail — the Metropolitan King County Council through its budget and King County Executive Dow Constantine through his administration — agree that in-person visitation and full programming should return sooner rather than later.

COVID and severe understaffing, however, have postponed that. As of Aug. 23, the jail had 17 adults with COVID in custody.

“I understand why some of these things were impacted by COVID and undoubtedly they’re having staffing challenges now, but it would be my position that we should get back to full programming and full visitation access as soon as possible,” King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci said.

But it’s unclear when in-person visitation and programming will resume. In June, former jail director John Diaz told the Metropolitan King County Council the jail was working on a program to give people electronic tablets while visitation and programming are limited.

The jail also continues to place people in cells with known suicide risks. Three suicides since August of last year involved bunks that officials identified as having a structural problem giving people the means to hang themselves.

The jail began retrofitting those bunks in 2021, but is not scheduled to finish fixing them until 2023. In the meantime, it is still placing people it doesn’t identify as suicidal in cells with unfixed bunks.

“I would prefer that no one — even those assessed not to be at risk of suicide — be placed in a cell with a yet-to-be retrofitted bunk, but given the number of people in custody and the number of bunks available, that is not a realistic possibility,” Constantine said in an emailed statement last month.

### **Political shifts**

In July 2020, amid historic racial justice protests, Constantine pledged to close the downtown Seattle jail. He called the facility, which was built in the ’80s, “decrepit and expensive to operate.” The county also operates a smaller jail, called the Maleng Regional Justice Center, in Kent. No deaths have been reported there in 2021 or 2022.

It’s unclear, however, what timeline Constantine has for closing the downtown jail. And since Constantine made that pledge, an uptick in crime in Seattle has reconfigured the debate around public safety and resulted in more people being booked.

Constantine has pointed to police, judges and prosecutors as the ultimate arbiters of who gets brought to jail — not his administration’s Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention.

“The solutions are more complex than refusing to book people suspected of committing serious crimes,” Constantine said in the statement. “They involve work to reduce the underlying conditions that lead to crime, and intervening in the lives of those who have gotten into trouble to get them back on track.”

Over the past two years, budgets passed by the Metropolitan King County Council have divested about \$1 million from the jail in anticipation of keeping the jail population at COVID-era levels and closing one of the floors. Yet since those budgets passed, the county’s overall average daily jail population increased to more than 1,500 as of last month — more than 20% over what was budgeted for.

King County Councilmember Girmay Zahilay, who chairs the council’s law, justice, health and human services committee, told The Seattle Times that having discussions about jail alternatives has become much trickier politically in 2022 than it was in 2020.

Politicians are increasingly blaming the Black Lives Matter and defund movement for heightened crime and visible poverty, Zahilay said, rather than the effects of the pandemic.

	<p>“Whether you point to jails, hospitals, or shelters, many of our reactionary institutions are far over capacity,” Zahilay said by email. “When we don’t properly invest in the long-term health, housing, and safety of our communities, the reactionary solutions will quickly hit their limits and fail to maintain any kind of sustainable success.”</p> <p>In February, both public defenders and corrections officers told the Metropolitan King County Council the jail needs to decrease the number of people in its care. “We’re unable to provide the very basic care to the inmates in our custody,” Folk, the corrections guild president, said.</p> <p>Since then, the council has held one briefing about the spate of deaths.</p> <p>In July, Constantine said he asked the detention department earlier in the year to review strategies for preventing suicides. Department officials replied “that they had already implemented widely-held best practices.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Phoenix shooting: 2 killed, 2 cops injured</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/2-phoenix-police-officers-injured-2-civilians-killed-shooting">https://www.foxnews.com/us/2-phoenix-police-officers-injured-2-civilians-killed-shooting</a>
GIST	<p>Two people were killed and several others were injured, including two police officers, <a href="#">in a shooting</a> in Phoenix, Arizona, Sunday night.</p> <p>Police Chief Jeri L. Williams confirmed the shooting during a press conference on Sunday night.</p> <p>Police initially responded to a crime scene at around 8:45 p.m. near 26th Ave and Deer Valley. Chief Williams said that a two-officer unit engaged the suspect after he started shooting.</p> <p>The gunman later retreated and was found dead. Police are still investigating exactly how the suspect died.</p> <p><a href="#">According to Phoenix police</a>, both officers sustained non-life-threatening injuries and are expected to recover. They were rushed to a hospital soon after the shooting.</p> <p>"Thankfully, those two officers are recovering and are talking, so they're in good spirits," Williams told reporters.</p> <p>Police confirmed that two community members were killed and "several" others were wounded at the scene, but authorities have not revealed how many were injured.</p> <p>It's unclear what sparked the shooting.</p> <p>Chief Williams described the crime scene as "massive" and emphasized that officers are still investigating.</p> <p>"This is a massive crime scene, which is why we're not taking any questions, because there's still a lot of work to do out of that crime scene," Williams said.</p> <p>The Arizona Department of Transportation also announced that an I-17 off-ramp was closed after the shooting.</p> <p>Chief Williams denounced the incident as an example of pervasive gun violence and called for action from community leaders.</p> <p>"It's another example of gun violence in our country," Williams asserted. "How many more officers have to be shot? How many more community members have to be killed before those in our community take a stand?"</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Arrests: Moorish Nation squatters</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thedailybeast.com/moorish-nation-members-darius-trrone-hall-and-nataijah-shaieena-fields-broke-into-ricky-stenhouse-jrs-home?ref=home">https://www.thedailybeast.com/moorish-nation-members-darius-trrone-hall-and-nataijah-shaieena-fields-broke-into-ricky-stenhouse-jrs-home?ref=home</a>
GIST	<p>A South Carolina couple accused of breaking into and squatting a \$16-million-dollar mansion belonging to a NASCAR driver have an interesting excuse: they are members of the “<a href="#">Moorish Nation</a>” that claims its members are the rightful owners of all property.</p> <p>Darius Trrone Hall, 29, and Nataijah Shaieena Fields, 37, were arrested earlier this month after allegedly breaking into the North Carolina home of NASCAR driver Ricky Stenhouse Jr., WB-TV reported. The <a href="#">Mooresville home</a> boasts five bedrooms, six bathrooms, and almost 10,000 square feet, and is currently on the market for \$15,995,000.</p> <p>Rowan County Sheriff Kevin Auten told the outlet that after their Aug. 19 arrest, Fields and Hall explained that they were members of the Moorish Nation and admitted to breaking into the house just off Highway 152. Fields was charged with breaking and entering, contributing to the delinquency of minors, and second-degree trespassing. Hall faces similar charges, and another count for allegedly carrying a concealed weapon. Both have been released on a secure bond.</p> <p>“My home was broken into and illegally occupied,” Stenhouse Jr. said in a statement to The Daily Beast. “I thank the Rowan County, North Carolina Sheriff’s Department for their prompt arrest of the suspects. I will have no further comment pending the outcome of any court proceedings against these individuals. Any claims by these individuals to a right in my property are without any basis in law or fact.”</p> <p>The Rowan County Sheriff did not immediately respond to The Daily Beast’s request for comment. Fields, however, insisted to The Daily Beast on Saturday via Facebook that the reports of her arrest “is falsified information and deformation of character that will legally and lawful [sic] addressed.”</p> <p>“Once legal/lawful vindication is achieved I will make sure that news station either redacts or correct this story,” she added via Facebook message.</p> <p>The 37-year-old’s Facebook contains photographs of paperwork that shows her affiliation with the Morocco Empire State and the Moorish National Republic. Another Facebook account that appears to belong to Hall shows similar Moorish National Republic paperwork. Hall could not be reached for comment and it is not immediately known whether he has retained an attorney.</p> <p>The Moorish National Republic is among one of several independent organizations in the Moorish sovereign citizen movement in which individuals believe they hold sovereignty over the federal and state governments. That sovereignty, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, means members believe they are immune from the legal system and therefore don’t have to pay taxes or go through the process of owning property. The Moorish National Republic, which bills itself as its own distinct government, did not return a request for comment.</p> <p>This is not the first time that the North Carolina area has had to deal with members of the Moorish Nation. In 2019, a Davidson couple was arrested after squatting in a five-bedroom estate owned by family members of the mayor. WB-TV reported that the couple—30-year-old Turmaine Thorne and 35-year-old Taqiyah Barber—reportedly arrived with a U-Haul loaded with their belongings and later told police they had a right to the <a href="#">property because of their religious beliefs</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Detroit: 4 randomly shot; shooter arrested</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/detroit-edge-gunman-targets-random-victims-killing/story?id=88973982">https://abcnews.go.com/US/detroit-edge-gunman-targets-random-victims-killing/story?id=88973982</a>
GIST	The city of Detroit was on edge after police said a single gunman randomly <a href="#">shot four victims</a> , three fatally, in 2 hours and 25 minutes Sunday morning.

The sole survivor of the killing rampage, an 80-year-old man, described being shot after spotting the suspect looking into cars and confronting him, police said.

Detroit police said Sunday night that the suspect is now in custody, and an investigation is in the early stages.

An all-hands-on-deck search involving multiple law enforcement agencies -- including the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Department of Homeland Security -- took place Sunday afternoon after police determined the same gun was used in all four shootings, authorities said.

During a news conference Sunday afternoon, Detroit Police Chief James White had described the suspect as a Black man in his mid-20s to early 30s, wearing all black, including a black Carhartt jacket with a hood.

"Evidence suggests a single suspect," White said. "At this time, we believe this to be a random act. There does not appear to be any relation between any of the crimes."

He said one of the victims was shot while waiting for a bus and another was shot while out walking a dog. Three of the four victims were fatally shot, police told Detroit ABC affiliate [WXYZ](#).

The shooting began at 4:45 a.m. when a 40-year-old woman was discovered shot multiple times in a neighborhood on the west side of Detroit, the chief said. Police said the woman died from her injuries.

While officers were investigating the shooting, a witness walked up and informed them of another victim nearby, White said. Police found a 28-year-old man who had also been shot multiple times, the chief said. He also died from his injuries.

At 6:50 a.m., the third victim, a woman in her 40s, was found shot multiple times, also on the west side of the city, and died, White said.

And at 7:10 a.m., the fourth victim, an 80-year-old man, was shot after he spotted the suspect peering into the windows of vehicles and confronted him, White said.

"When he told him to get away from the vehicles, he turned and fired at him, striking him once," said White, adding that the victim was shot in the arm.

The octogenarian victim was in stable condition at a hospital Sunday night, police said.

The names of the victims were not immediately released.

White said the suspect did not rob or attempt to rob any of the victims.

Using technology, investigators were able to quickly analyze shell casings from each of the crime scenes and determine that the same gun was used in all four shootings, White said.

"We have mobilized all of our technology, our personnel, our intelligence and our community assets to investigate these incidents. We are currently searching to apprehend the suspect," White said, adding that law enforcement helicopters were also scouring the city.

"To the families and friends of these victims, we will continue to work to get this suspect into custody," White said.

Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan pleaded for the public's help in catching the suspect. He asked people to study the surveillance photo released of the armed-and-dangerous perpetrator and to contact police if they see him. He said anyone who comes in contact with the suspect should not attempt to approach him.

	<p>He said the most important thing that can happen is that someone who knows the suspect or has a relationship with him comes forward to law enforcement immediately before he surfaces and strikes again.</p> <p>"Nobody in this department wants a violent confrontation with this individual," Duggan said. "It's not safe for our officers, it's not safe for the perpetrator, it's not safe for civilians in the area."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Shooting: Safeway in Bend Oregon; 3 dead</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/dead-shooting-safeway-oregon-police/story?id=88382502">https://abcnews.go.com/US/dead-shooting-safeway-oregon-police/story?id=88382502</a>
GIST	<p>At least three people are dead following a shooting inside a Safeway supermarket in Oregon on Sunday evening, police said.</p> <p>The incident was reported just after 7 p.m. local time at The Forum Shopping Center in Bend, a small city on the Deschutes River, some 130 miles southeast of Oregon's capital, Salem. The suspected shooter is among the dead, the Bend Police Department told ABC News.</p> <p>Police believe the suspect entered from the back of the shopping center and initially fired into a Costco parking lot and a Big Lots store. There were no injuries reported at either of those locations, according to police.</p> <p>Police believe the suspect then entered the Safeway and shot at least one person near the west entrance. That individual was transported to a local hospital and confirmed dead, police said.</p> <p>The suspect continued inside the supermarket, shooting and killing at least one additional person, according to police.</p> <p>Officers responding to the shooting entered the Safeway and found another individual, believed to be the shooter, dead inside the store. The officers fired no shots, police said.</p> <p>The deadly shooting remains under investigation.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Coney Island shooting: 1 killed, 4 injured</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.fox5ny.com/news/5-people-shot-coney-island-boardwalk-aug-27">https://www.fox5ny.com/news/5-people-shot-coney-island-boardwalk-aug-27</a>
GIST	<p><b>NEW YORK</b> - One man is dead and 4 other people are injured after a shooting on the <a href="#">Coney Island</a> boardwalk late on Saturday night.</p> <p>The <a href="#">NYPD</a> says the shooting took place just before midnight at Boardwalk and West 29th St. at Coney Island Beach.</p> <p>A 42-year-old man was shot in the back and died at the hospital.</p> <p>A 49-year-old woman was shot in the right leg, a 34-year-old was shot in the right foot, a 46-year-old man was shot in the left leg, and another man was shot in the left leg.</p> <p>EMS took all five victims to NYU Langone Hospital - Brooklyn. The surviving victims are all listed in stable condition. There are no arrests at this time. The <a href="#">New York City Police Department</a> says that the investigation is ongoing.</p> <p>The identity of the victim who was killed has not been released so that his family can be notified first.</p> <p>This is the second time 5 people have been shot on the Coney Island boardwalk this summer. In July, a <a href="#">gunman opened fire around 2 a.m. on a crowd standing on the boardwalk</a> near West 21st St. One victim in that shooting was critically injured.</p>

HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Community court cuts jail bookings 87%</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://crosscut.com/news/2022/08/some-community-court-reduces-jail-bookings-87">https://crosscut.com/news/2022/08/some-community-court-reduces-jail-bookings-87</a>
GIST	<p>Sitting at a square-shaped arrangement of folding tables inside a one-story building in Auburn, Adriana Perez explained to a judge, prosecutor and two defense attorneys seated around her about the treatment plan for the ulcers on her legs.</p> <p>“They’ll clean them, and scrape them, wrap them,” Perez said on a recent Thursday.</p> <p>The wounds were the result of seven years of IV heroin use and now were not only extremely painful, but needed to be treated so she could go into drug addiction treatment, a requirement as part of her participation in the community court in Auburn.</p> <p>Sergio Flores, a city prosecutor in Auburn, responded: “That’s going to be a really challenging time,” he told Perez. “That’s a lot of physical pain, emotional pain. So maybe next week you can tell us if there’s a way that we can support you through that process.”</p> <p>For Perez, who was referred to the community court after drug paraphernalia was found in her car, this type of compassion has kept her coming back to court every Thursday since June.</p> <p>She has struggled with drug addiction for 15 years and was living in her car when she was charged. But since opting into community court, she has been able to get a place to live, an appointment at a local wound care center and an ORCA card.</p> <p>“If I wanted to, I could just quit and go back to mainstream court and just take the paraphernalia charge. ... [But] they just believe in me, so it makes me believe in myself,” she said during a phone interview.</p> <p>Four years after the King County District Court’s first community court was founded as an alternative to the traditional justice system – emphasizing rehabilitation over incarceration for those with low-level offenses – the program has grown to four community courts and accompanying resource centers and seen widespread success.</p> <p>From 2018 to now, of the 226 people who left community court in Redmond, Auburn and Shoreline (Burien was not included as it has been on pause since 2020 due to the pandemic) 84% graduated, according to court data shared with Crosscut.</p> <p>According to the <a href="#">2021 King County Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) report</a>, by the third year after enrolling in community court in King County, participants saw 87% fewer jail bookings compared to the year before enrollment.</p> <p>The resource centers, which are open at the same times and in the same buildings as the community courts they’re affiliated with, have also stayed full of treatment and housing providers, including the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and United Healthcare, as well as representatives available to help with food assistance, transportation and job acquisition.</p> <p>But the courts haven’t been completely immune to setbacks.</p> <p>When COVID arrived in Washington in 2020, the community courts closed their doors, explained Callista Welbaum, therapeutic courts manager for King County District Court.</p> <p>Months later, they reopened as a completely virtual system. But some participants didn’t have a smartphone or any other way to access the system virtually, which made their participation impossible in some cases, she said.</p>

The community courts system [is paid for through the sales tax in King County](#). But during the pandemic, with the shuttering of restaurants and most other businesses, the county's therapeutic courts saw nearly a 50% decrease in their budget, according to Welbaum. They were forced to close the community court in Burien and lay off a coordinator.

Today, with their funding restored (it's unclear when the Burien community court will reopen), the courts and their accompanying resource centers now operate in a hybrid model, with both participants and resource providers sometimes attending via videoconference.

The switch has meant that those in rehab centers or with transportation challenges can still make it to court. It has also increased the availability of resource providers, as they can help participants by simply joining the Zoom link.

### **Across the country**

The King County community courts are just some of the dozens of similar courts that have popped up in cities across the U.S. over the past nearly three decades. Beginning with a court in New York City, overall the programs aim to cut down on crime and needless incarceration by taking a more individualized and rehabilitative approach to justice. (In 2020, Seattle added its own community court for those with low-level misdemeanor charges.)

The prosecutor's office normally starts the process by identifying possible community court participants. They typically have such charges as theft or trespassing, while those with driving, domestic violence or other violent offenses are not eligible, explained Rebecca Mueller, city of Redmond supervising prosecutor.

The defendant would then observe the court and participate in an intake assessment. Later, the defense and prosecution would agree to a Stipulated Order of Continuance, or SOC, a contract between the city and defendant in which the defendant would need to agree to a series of conditions and treatments, such as no drugs and alcohol, a mental health evaluation, community service and attending court each week. (Jail does not typically have any role in community court.) The individual then has the option to opt-in.

The contract does involve giving up some rights, explained Welbaum. If they're not successful in the program, they won't get another trial. A judge would look at the police record and determine their guilt or innocence.

But if they do make it through the typically three- to six-month process, their case will be dismissed.

Melissa Duarte is set to graduate from the community court in Redmond next month.

She enrolled in the court system after accruing seven warrants for stealing in order to pay for her family to sleep in a hotel room. Now, she has been able to access therapy every week, get a phone and an ORCA card and, mere days before her partner is due to give birth, receive a Section 8 housing voucher.

"They've become my family; the people that I turn to if I have issues," said Duarte. "They're not just there for whatever you're there for. They're there to support you; to be there for you; to lift you up when you're down."

Judge Leah Taguba, who previously served as a prosecutor for more than 15 years, said she joined the community court in Auburn after noticing how often she came in contact as a prosecutor with "generally good people" who found themselves in bad situations. She said she also noticed the way minorities were being impacted.

"As a woman of color, and seeing communities of color being disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, I've really felt strongly that I think we can do better. ... With these systems of oppression in place, finding alternatives is going to be one of the ways that we can combat this systemic imprisonment of people of color."

	<p>According to a 2021 King County Auditor's Office report, between 2017 and 2019 Black people represented 7% of the King County population, <a href="#">but they made up 36% of the people in the county's adult jails</a>.</p> <p>In King County's community courts, 67% of participants were white, while 14% were Black, according to the 2021 MIDD report.</p> <p>Last year, the community courts were awarded an equity and inclusion grant for training to look at potential inequities related to everything from eligibility criteria to program outcomes, according to Welbaum.</p> <p>For Perez, the Auburn community court has had a very positive impact on her life. She's now working on a parenting plan to help her with her 12-year-old daughter, who currently lives with her father, and on accessing drug treatment.</p> <p>During the recent Thursday court session, defense attorney Anne Dederer asked her how she was doing. Perez didn't hesitate:</p> <p>"I feel like there's like, hope now. Before, I was just so depressed, and I didn't realize how much depression really weighs on your body. And so now I feel like I'm accomplishing stuff and a purpose. I don't know, I feel more energized, more happy."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Houston arsonist shoots fleeing people</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/08/28/houston-arsonists-fatally-shoots-three/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/08/28/houston-arsonists-fatally-shoots-three/</a>
GIST	<p>Four people were dead after a man set a residence on fire, shot at people fleeing and was then killed by a police officer early Sunday in Houston, authorities said.</p> <p>Just after 1 a.m., the city's police and fire departments received calls about a fire and shooting at a house used as a rental facility, Houston Police Chief Troy Finner said at a <a href="#">news conference</a>. Firefighters arrived first but had to take cover when the gunman opened fire, although it was not clear if he was firing at them.</p> <p>Soon after that, police officers got to the scene and found the shooter in a parking lot across the street from the house. An officer shot and killed the man, who was dressed in black and armed with a shotgun, Finner said. Two residents were pronounced dead at the scene, and a third died at a hospital.</p> <p>"I've seen things that I haven't seen before in 32 years," the police chief said. "And it's happened time and time again, and people ask the police chief and police leaders, 'Why?' And we don't even know right now. We just ask that the community come together."</p> <p>Authorities did not name the people killed. They said the gunman was in his 40s and the victims were men between the ages of 40 and 60. In addition to those who were killed, a man was taken to the hospital with a gunshot wound to his arm. One other man had minor injuries that did not require a hospital visit.</p> <p>The gunman had recently been told he would be evicted, Finner said. "That may have been a trigger point for him, but I don't know," he said. "That's part of the investigation."</p> <p>The officer who shot the suspect is a seven-year veteran of the force and has been placed on administrative leave under Houston Police Department policy. The district attorney's office is investigating, and the police agency will conduct its own investigation.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/28 Dutch commandos shot outside hotel</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/28/three-dutch-commandos-wounded-in-shooting-outside-us-hotel">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/28/three-dutch-commandos-wounded-in-shooting-outside-us-hotel</a>
GIST	<p>Three Dutch commandos in the United States for training exercises have been wounded in a shooting in downtown Indianapolis after what local police believe was a disturbance outside the hotel where they were staying, authorities say.</p> <p>The Dutch defence ministry said one of the men was in critical condition and the two others were conscious, while Indianapolis police said two of the soldiers were in critical condition and the third was stable.</p> <p>The three soldiers were from the Commando Corps and were in Indiana for training when the shooting occurred during their free time in front of the hotel where they were staying, the Dutch ministry said.</p> <p>The shooting occurred about 3.30am in Indianapolis' entertainment district. Police said officers found three men with gunshot wounds and they were taken to hospitals in the area.</p> <p>Police said they believed some sort of altercation between the three victims and another person or people led to the shooting.</p> <p>The ministry said the shooting victims' families had been informed while Indianapolis police continued to investigate the shooting.</p> <p>No arrests have been made.</p> <p>An Indianapolis metropolitan police department officer told Fox 59 it appeared an altercation took place earlier at a different location from the Hampton Inn in downtown Indianapolis.</p> <p>"Right now the information we're willing to disclose is that it was not something that occurred inside the hotel," the officer told the news channel.</p> <p>"It was a previous altercation, we believe, at another location. It did not happen inside the Hampton – the actual occurrence was outside."</p> <p>The Indiana National Guard said the soldiers had been training at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, a 1,000-acre (405 hectare) complex about 40 miles (65km) south-east of Indianapolis. The guard said in a statement that the center was used for training by the Department of Defense "as well as other allies".</p> <p>"The Dutch soldiers visited Indianapolis at the end of their duty day," the guard said.</p> <p>A Pentagon spokesperson, when asked who the commandos were training with and whether any US personnel were involved in the incident, referred questions to local civilian authorities, adding the situation remained under investigation.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Court: DC-area sniper to be resented</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/maryland-court-rules-dc-area-sniper-to-be-resenten/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/maryland-court-rules-dc-area-sniper-to-be-resenten/</a>
GIST	<p>ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — Maryland's highest court has ruled that Washington, D.C.-area sniper Lee Boyd Malvo must be resented, because of U.S. Supreme Court decisions relating to constitutional protections for juveniles made after Malvo was sentenced to six life sentences without the possibility of parole</p> <p>In its 4-3 ruling, however, the Maryland Court of Appeals said it's very unlikely Malvo would ever be released from custody, because he is also serving separate life sentences for murders in Virginia.</p>

“As a practical matter, this may be an academic question in Mr. Malvo’s case, as he would first have to be granted parole in Virginia before his consecutive life sentences in Maryland even begin,” Judge Robert McDonald wrote in the majority opinion released Friday.

McDonald wrote that it’s ultimately not up to the Court of Appeals to decide the appropriate sentence for Malvo, or whether he should ever be released from his Maryland sentences.

“We hold only that the Eighth Amendment requires that he receive a new sentencing hearing at which the sentencing court, now cognizant of the principles elucidated by the Supreme Court, is able to consider whether or not he is constitutionally eligible for life without parole under those decisions,” McDonald wrote.

Malvo, 37, is now confined at the Red Onion State Prison in Virginia.

Malvo and his mentor, John Allen Muhammad, shot people in Virginia, Maryland and Washington as they pumped gas, loaded packages into their cars and went about their everyday business during a three-week period in 2002. Malvo was 17 at the time; Muhammad was 41.

Muhammad was sentenced to death and was executed in Virginia in 2009.

In Maryland, Malvo voluntarily testified against Muhammad. In 2006, Malvo pleaded guilty to six counts of first-degree murder in Montgomery County in the suburbs of the nation’s capital.

At his sentencing that year, the prosecutor stated that Malvo, once under the sway of an “evil man,” had changed and “grown tremendously” since his participation in the crimes, according to the Court of Appeals ruling.

The ruling said Malvo’s sentence was “consistent with the pertinent State statute and with the advisory State sentencing guidelines at that time.”

“Since then, however, the Supreme Court has held that the Eighth Amendment does not permit a sentence of life without parole for a juvenile homicide offender if a sentencing court determines that the offender’s crime was the result of transient immaturity, as opposed to permanent incorrigibility,” the ruling said.

The ruling also noted that the Supreme Court has held that the legal constraint applies retroactively and applies to Malvo’s case.

Judges Jonathan Biran, Brynja Booth and Joseph Getty joined McDonald in the majority. Judges Shirley Watts, Michele Hotten and Steven Gould dissented.

Watts wrote that the sentencing court took Malvo’s status as a juvenile into account.

“The record demonstrates that Mr. Malvo received a personalized sentencing procedure at which his youth and its attendant characteristics were considered, and the circuit court was aware that it had the discretion to impose a lesser sentence,” Watts wrote.

Hotten wrote that any alleged finding of corrigibility “did not render petitioner’s sentences unconstitutional disproportionate as applied.”

“Rather the proportionality of Petitioner’s sentences must be weighed against the severity of his crimes,” Hotten wrote. “Petitioner committed some of the worst crimes in the history of the State. It was not grossly disproportionate that a heavy penalty was imposed.”

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HEADLINE	08/27 Prison stays leave ex-inmates in deep debt
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/at-249-per-day-prison-stays-leave-ex-inmates-deep/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/27/at-249-per-day-prison-stays-leave-ex-inmates-deep/</a>

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) —Two decades after her release from prison, Teresa Beatty feels she is still being punished.

When her mother died two years ago, the state of Connecticut put a lien on the Stamford home she and her siblings inherited. It said she owed \$83,762 to cover the cost of her 2 1/2 year imprisonment for drug crimes.

Now, she's afraid she'll have to sell her home of 51 years, where she lives with two adult children, a grandchild and her disabled brother.

"I'm about to be homeless," said Beatty, 58, who in March became the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit challenging the state law that charges prisoners \$249 a day for the cost of their incarceration. "I just don't think it's right, because I feel I already paid my debt to society. I just don't think it's fair for me to be paying twice."

All but two states have so-called "pay-to-stay" laws that make prisoners pay for their time behind bars, though not every state actually pursues people for the money. Supporters say the collections are a legitimate way for states to recoup millions of taxpayer dollars spent on prisons and jails.

Critics say it's an unfair second penalty that hinders rehabilitation by putting former inmates in debt for life. Efforts have been underway in some places to scale back or eliminate such policies.

Two states - Illinois and New Hampshire - have repealed their laws since 2019.

Connecticut also overhauled its statute this year, keeping it in place only for the most serious crimes, such as murder, and exempting prisoners from having to pay the first \$50,000 of their incarceration costs.

Under the revised law, about 98% of Connecticut inmates no longer have to pay any of the costs of their incarceration after they get out, said state Rep. Steve Stafstrom, a Bridgeport Democrat and a sponsor of the repeal legislation.

The state retained its ability, though, to collect some prison debts already on the books before the law changed. It's unclear whether the change in the law, made after Beatty sued, will be enough to keep her in her home. That will be decided in court.

Her lawyers have asked a federal judge to block the state from enforcing the law against anyone, saying it remains unfair even after the amendments.

Beatty acknowledges she was guilty of selling and possessing drugs, but said nobody told her when she went to jail that every day behind bars would cost her more than a night at a fine hotel.

"It just drags you back to despair," said Beatty, who has had other brushes with the law over drug possession since her release from jail, but has also become a certified nursing assistant. "That's where I feel like I'm at. I feel like no hope. Where do I go? All of this work and it feels like I've done it in vain."

Pay-to-stay laws were put into place in many areas during the tough-on-crime era of the 1980s and '90s, said Brittany Friedman, an assistant professor of sociology at University of Southern California who is leading a study of the practice.

As prison populations ballooned, Friedman said, policymakers questioned how to pay for incarceration costs. "So, instead of raising taxes, the solution was to shift the cost burden from the state and the taxpayers onto the incarcerated."

Laws vary from state to state. Many, like Connecticut, only go after inmates for the cost of incarceration if they come into money after leaving prison. A few, such as North Carolina, have laws on the books but almost never use them, Friedman said.

Connecticut's partial repeal went into effect July 1. The state is projected to collect about \$5.5 million less per year from ex-prisoners because of the change.

State Sen. John Kissel, the top Republican on the legislature's Judiciary Committee, said he opposed the repeal passed by the Democratic majority, but might support reforms like allowing inmates to pay off debt in installments.

Kissel said that while Beatty's situation tugs at one's heartstrings, "Everybody has issues."

"The policy is to make one appreciate that your incarceration costs money," he said. "The taxpayers footed the bill. They didn't do anything wrong. And knowing that one has to pay the state back a reasonable sum on a regular basis is not a bad policy."

Connecticut used to collect prison debt by attaching an automatic lien to every inmate, claiming half of any financial windfall they might receive for up to 20 years after they are released from prison, said Dan Barrett, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut. That included things like insurance settlements, inheritances and lottery winnings.

The state even collected money awarded to inmates in lawsuits over alleged abuse by prison guards.

Former Connecticut inmate Fred Hodges, who served more than 17 years in prison for killing a man while trying to retrieve his son's stolen bicycle, came into \$21,000 after his car was totaled in a 2009 traffic accident. The state claimed half of that, he said. After paying his lawyer, he was left with about \$3,000.

"I have seven grandchildren and the money could have helped them. It could have helped me," said Hodges, who works for a nonprofit that helps other inmates reenter society. "You'd be surprised at the effect it can have on you psychologically when they tell you you owe them \$249 a day. I was locked up for 17 1/2 years. At \$249 a day, how are you going to come up out of that?"

Beatty's lawsuit, which is seeking class-action status, argues that the pay-to-stay seizures violate the excessive fines clause of the Constitution.

Da'ee McKnight, who works with Hodges as a coordinator for an organization called Family ReEntry, said the state took an insurance settlement from him, even though he served most of his sentence before the law was on the books.

"Here, I'm being penalized for something that I was not even made aware of at the time I was sentenced, because it did not even exist," he said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Seattle continues to face violent crime rise</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/overnight-shooting-stabbing-seattle-highlight-recent-rise-violent-crime/W7QBNXKB6FFL5FD4ZUQAYE3OIY/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/overnight-shooting-stabbing-seattle-highlight-recent-rise-violent-crime/W7QBNXKB6FFL5FD4ZUQAYE3OIY/</a>
GIST	<p>Seattle continues to see a rise in violent crime.</p> <p>Just this week, police have responded to multiple shootings and stabbings, including one just after midnight Saturday morning <a href="#">where a man was stabbed multiple times during a robbery</a> near Third Avenue and University Street.</p> <p>Hours later, a 34-year-old was shot near Fifth Avenue and Union Street, according to the Seattle Fire Department. That man was taken to Harborview Medical Center in stable condition.</p> <p>CrimeStoppers says it's seen the rise in crime over the past two years and fears it won't go away any time soon if police continue to face staffing shortages.</p>

KIRO 7 spoke with Bob Corwin on Saturday, who said he's lived in Seattle for over 50 years. He said the city does have its problems, but he feels it's still a safe place to be.

And while violent crime has gone up in the Emerald City, he has hope that current leadership, and even the public, can help Seattle move forward in the right way.

"Because you can't really control all of that as much as people would like to," said Corwin. "And they aren't going to solve them overnight, but I feel like they are moving in the right direction. And I like just having that attitude of being more open-minded and progressive."

KIRO 7 reached out to the Downtown Seattle Association on recent violent crime, especially with this weekend drawing in a lot of people for Ichiro Suzuki's Mariners Hall of Fame induction ceremony Saturday night.

Their response: "Visitors and workers should expect to feel safe in the heart of our city. The mayor's SPD recruitment and retention plan puts us on the right path, but recent events serve as reminders that our community needs immediate intervention as well. Solving this issue is critical."

When KIRO 7 spoke with CrimeStoppers, they were adamant about the staffing problems police are facing. They said that even if more cops were hired tomorrow, it would still take months of training before they are on the streets, responding to calls.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/27 Julian Assange appeals US extradition</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/aug/27/julian-assange-files-appeal-against-us-extradition">https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/aug/27/julian-assange-files-appeal-against-us-extradition</a>
GIST	<p>Lawyers for WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange have filed an appeal against his extradition to the US, as the <a href="#">United Nations</a> human rights chief lends support to the Australian's cause.</p> <p>Assange, 51, has been indicted on 17 espionage charges in the US and one charge of computer misuse over WikiLeaks' publication of thousands of military and diplomatic documents leaked by whistleblower Chelsea Manning. The charges carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.</p> <p>WikiLeaks says Assange's legal team filed "perfected grounds of appeal" in the UK's high court against the US and the UK home secretary, Priti Patel, who <a href="#">approved his extradition in June</a>.</p> <p>Assange's lawyers argue he is "being prosecuted and punished for his political opinions".</p> <p>His wife said the prosecution was unlawful. "Overwhelming evidence has emerged proving that the US prosecution against my husband is a criminal abuse," Stella Assange said on Twitter on Saturday.</p> <p>"The high court judges will now decide whether Julian is given the opportunity to put the case against the US before open court, and in full, at the appeal."</p> <p>Assange remains in London's Belmarsh prison, where he has been in detention since April 2019.</p> <p>A UK judge blocked his extradition last year but the US government successfully appealed in the high court.</p> <p>The Australian prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has previously stated <a href="#">"enough is enough"</a> regarding Assange's ongoing detention.</p> <p>The appeal comes after the UN human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, met with Assange's lawyers and his wife in Geneva.</p>

	Advocacy group the Assange Defence Committee told AAP they detailed to her his deteriorating health, with the Australian publisher suffering a mini-stroke recently.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Mexico report on 43 disappeared students</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/mexico-missing-students-kept-alive-warehouse">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/mexico-missing-students-kept-alive-warehouse</a>
GIST	<p>Six of the 43 Mexican students forcibly disappeared in 2014 were allegedly kept alive in a warehouse for days, and then turned over to the commander of the local army base who ordered their killings, the Mexican government official leading the Truth Commission said Friday.</p> <p>The interior undersecretary, Alejandro Encinas, made the revelation with little fanfare during a lengthy defense of the commission's report, first released a week earlier. At that time, <a href="#">despite declaring the disappearances a "state crime"</a> and saying that the army watched it happen without intervening, Encinas made no mention of six students being turned over to Col José Rodríguez Pérez.</p> <p>On Friday, Encinas emphasized that <a href="#">authorities were closely monitoring the students</a> from the radical teachers' college at Ayotzinapa from the time they left their campus through their abduction by local police in the town of Iguala that night. A soldier who had infiltrated the school was among the abducted students and Encinas asserted that the army had not followed its own protocols to try to rescue him.</p> <p>"There is also information corroborated with emergency 089 telephone calls where allegedly six of the 43 disappeared students were held during several days and alive in what they call the old warehouse and from there were turned over to the colonel," Encinas said. "Allegedly the six students were alive for as many as four days after the events and were killed and disappeared on orders of the colonel, allegedly the then Col José Rodríguez Pérez."</p> <p>The defense department did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the allegations Friday.</p> <p>The truth commission report notes that the army registered an anonymous emergency call on 30 September 2014, four days after the students' abduction. The caller said the students were being held in a large concrete warehouse in a location described as "Pueblo Viejo". The caller proceeded to describe the location.</p> <p>That entry was followed by several pages of redacted material, but that section of the report concluded with the following: "As can be seen, obvious collusion existed between agents of the Mexican state with the criminal group <a href="#">Guerreros Unidos</a> that tolerated, allowed and participated in events of violence and disappearance of the students, as well as the government's attempt to hide the truth about the events."</p> <p>Later, in a summary of how the commission's report differed from the original investigation's conclusions, there is mention of a colonel.</p> <p>"On September 30 'the colonel' mentions that they will take care of cleaning everything up and that they had already taken charge of the six students who had remained alive," the report said.</p> <p>On 26 September 2014, <a href="#">local police took the students off buses</a> they had commandeered in Iguala. The motive remains unclear eight years later. Their bodies have never been found, though fragments of burned bone have been matched to three of the students.</p> <p>The families of the missing students have for years pressured the government to more deeply investigate the military's involvement.</p> <p>Last week, federal agents arrested <a href="#">former attorney general Jesus Murillo Karam</a>, who oversaw the original investigation. On Wednesday, a judge ordered that he stand trial for forced disappearance, torture and official misconduct. Prosecutors allege Murillo Karam created a false narrative about what happened to the students to quickly appear to resolve the case.</p>



	<p>Authorities also last week said arrest warrants were issued for 20 army soldiers and officers, five local officials, 33 local police officers and 11 state police officers as well as 14 gang members. Neither the army nor prosecutors have said how many of those suspects are now in custody.</p> <p>It was also not immediately clear if Rodríguez Pérez was among those sought.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Crimes against children concerning trend</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/crimes-against-children-a-concerning-trend-in-western-washington">https://www.q13fox.com/news/crimes-against-children-a-concerning-trend-in-western-washington</a>
GIST	<p><b>WESTERN WASHINGTON</b> - A growing issue is troubling law enforcement officials as thieves target children.</p> <p>Incidents on the rise over the last few months in Everett where an 11-year-old boy was swindled when a man paid with a counterfeit \$100 bill.</p> <p>In Tacoma, two 10 and 13-year-old cousins were robbed of their hard-earned money. It was \$80 they say a teen reached in and grabbed it from their register outside their lemonade stand.</p> <p>Auburn Police are still trying to track down a man they say yanked a gold chain off a 4-year-old little girls neck</p> <p>The most recent was on Aug. 25 in Parkland where two 17-year-old boys held a 10-year-old girl at gunpoint.</p> <p>A traumatic experience for the child as the teens are now charged with felony assault, possession of a stolen firearm and unlawful possession of a firearm.</p> <p>The incident was reported at the Altitude Apartments off 104th Street in Parkland.</p> <p>At first glance, it's like any other neighborhood, but around 1:30 in the afternoon an alarming call came through 911, according to Pierce County Sergeant Darren Moss.</p> <p>"I heard the call when it came out, and I was thinking at first thought is it was probably kids playing with toy guns," Moss said.</p> <p>Unfortunately, that wasn't the case.</p> <p>Sgt. Darren Moss says he and other Pierce County deputies were shocked and angered to hear two 17-year-old boys held a 10-year-old at gunpoint.</p> <p>"I'm fed up, done, sick of it. I don't want to see it," Moss said.</p> <p>This incident hits close to home for Moss who grew up in the neighborhood.</p> <p>"Doesn't have to be this way. It wasn't this way when I was a kid. Now I have to see that stuff. So it's ridiculous. It's absolutely ridiculous," Moss said.</p> <p>The teens were arrested at the HeatherStone Apartments after deputies say they followed another child to this complex.</p> <p>While speaking with her, deputies spotted the teens and found two guns on their waistbands, a 9-millimeter and a 40 caliber – one of them stolen from Federal Way in 2021.</p> <p>"We don't need any more reminders of why gun violence is bad, why kids shouldn't be playing with guns, why kids shouldn't have access to guns," Moss said.</p>

Moss is not only concerned about the ongoing gun violence impacting children.

In general, more and more crimes are being committed against children more often.

Karen Avila, owns Tienda La Bonita, in Auburn.

She usually brings her four-year-old daughter, Kaylee Rios to work with her.

But on Aug. 15, she says while she was making her daughter lunch this man approached the little girl – and yanked her gold necklace off her neck.

Avila says the crime traumatized her daughter, who hasn't been sleeping and won't return to the restaurant worried the man will show back up.

The mother says she was shocked because the man is a frequent customer.

Now she's calling on him and others targeting children – to think twice about the mental harm it can cause.

Sgt. Moss says this is a hard conversation for parents to have with their children; it's not something they should be doing.

Instead, he was a reminder for every child – think before you act.

"Everybody gets to make their own decisions. Everybody gets to grow up and be an adult at some point," Moss said.

Pierce County deputies are hoping the 10-year-old victim comes forward, so they can help her cope with the situation.

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HEADLINE	08/27 Spokane park shooting: 1 killed, 3 injured
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/four-shot-franklin-park-in-north-spokane/293-7414edec-0e7c-4b7d-b550-c288c4ce851a">https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/four-shot-franklin-park-in-north-spokane/293-7414edec-0e7c-4b7d-b550-c288c4ce851a</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — Four people were shot early Saturday morning at Franklin Park in north Spokane, including one man who died, according to Spokane police.</p> <p>Police received several calls around 3:15 a.m. about a shooting in the parking lot off of Queen Avenue, near the playground on the south end of Franklin Park. The park is located just off Division Street, across from NorthTown Mall.</p> <p>When officers arrived, they found four people who had been shot. One man was dead. The other three people were taken to the hospital or treated on scene for gunshot wounds. SPD reported one person had life-threatening injuries to the head.</p> <p>Initial reports indicate that there was a dispute at the park that escalated into the shooting, according to police. It is not clear what the relationship is between the four people who were shot.</p> <p>SPD reports no one has been arrested at this time.</p> <p>The Spokane Police Department Major Crimes Unit is leading the investigation.</p> <p>Police have blocked off Queen Avenue as part of the investigation from Division Street to Calispel Street. The road remained closed as of 7:30 a.m.</p>

	Police are asking anyone with information to call crime check at (509) 456-2233.
	The shooting follows another at a Spokane Park earlier this week. On Thursday, <a href="#">four people were shot at Dutch Jake Park in west central Spokane</a> . There is no indication the shootings are related.
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